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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted at North Shore Community College (NSCC) to determine the academic and social problems or needs of returning women students over 35 years of age and to develop a model support system for these students. Questionnaires were administered to 50 randomly selected older women students, 9 counselors, 35 faculty members, and 12 administrators. Students were asked to provide information on their personal characteristics, enrollment influences, relationships with faculty and other students, academic problems and preferences, and need for and evaluation of various college services. Staff members were asked to answer questions based on their encounters with returning women students and to evaluate the same list of services. The study report includes: (1) a series of recommendations concerning recruitment and retention, career and vocational counseling, social support services, alternative options for returning women, and credit for prior learning; (2) proposals for a peer support system, a returning student program, special publications for returning students, a campus information and referral service, guidelines for working with returning women, and an older student handbook; (3) a proposal for a returning women program; (4) a literature review; and (5) survey findings regarding the characteristics of older women students, recruitment and retention, social and academic problems, information and services, and program evaluation. The questionnaires are appended. (DAB)

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# EVALUATION OF THE SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC PROBLEMS OF THE RETURNING WOMAN STUDENT (35+)

Presented to Faculty, Counselors, Administrators and all interested staff members of North Shore Community College and to Larry Myers and Peter Foss in fulfillment of the requirements of ALT 102, Contract Learning.

Betty A. Wintersteen

JC 820 529

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# EVALUATION OF THE SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC PROBLEMS OF THE RETURNING WOMAN STUDENT (35+)

## INTRODUCTION

American higher education is not responsive to the concerns and the needs of the older returning student, especially the older woman, contends the author. In order to support this hypothesis, the author will present evidence - a result of research of the social and academic problems and/or needs of the older returning woman student (35+) at North Shore Community College.

Using a target group and specific issues, the author will then propose a model support system for these students, based on their needs; establish guidelines for working with displaced/returning women students; and indicate a coordinated approach for recruitment/retention of the older returning woman students as well as identifying the needs of this group.

In order to evaluate the problems and needs, the author began by identifying the perceived needs of this group of students. Questionnaires were compiled to interview not only returning women, but also Faculty, Counselors, and mid and top-level management. These questionnaires focused on academic and social problems and asked each sector to evaluate the components of North Shore Community College in regard to fulfilling the needs of the older returning woman student. (See Figures III, IV, V, and VI in the Appendix.) Statistics were then compiled and analyzed. After examining the responses from each questionnaire group, recommendations were then presented.

EVALUATION OF THE SOCIAL AND
ACADEMIC PROBLEMS OF THE
RETURNING WOMAN STUDENT (35+)

RECOMMENDATIONS

The responses from each questionnaire group has been examined and evaluated. The author has presented some basic ideas within the body of the research paper as to fulfilling the academic and social problems of the older woman student. This data can be expanded upon and further developed.

The important point to remember is: although there will be much diversity in opinions regarding women's issues among the institution's staff and body of students, there is a need for an organized effort to provide help, information, support and advocacy for returning women - women who have a common cause in growing and learning. The institution must recognize that this population (and that of all older returning students) will be increasing in the future. Institutions have to service the clientele that is of market value. The world of academia must recognize that goals and missions have to be changed to meet this new, non-traditional market.

We will now present just what can be done and what should be done for the re-entry woman student.

Recruitment and Retention

The author's research has established that the best public relations work for North Shore Community College has been done by word-of-mouth and that the information has come from former or current students. Let us examine some ways we could recruit and retain the older women students.

- We need to examine available institutional data about re-entry women students and applicants. The author found it very difficult to get hard facts.

- A Task Force composed of administrators, faculty, staff, and, most importantly, re-entry women should be established to examine the current recruiting practices. There has been a great deal of time spent on examining recruiting practices for students on a whole. However, at this point in time, there seems to be a greater emphasis spent on recruiting directly from high school. As more and more students are in the older than high school age bracket, more thought and effort should be put into how to reach the re-entry student.

- The institution needs to determine whether special services are needed to retain these women as students. Some of the needs that the target group felt was of importance will be presented as part of the model.

- It is important that the entire institution support both strategies and programs aimed at recruiting re-entry women.

- Re-entry women should be included in all phases of recruiting. It is also important that the institution recognize that the current re-entry woman can give positive input as to the kinds of information that is helpful and/or lacking.

COUNSELING NEEDS OF RE-ENTRY WOMEN

We have stated in the research paper that most women do not feel comfortable talking to a younger and/or male counselor. It is important that any institution have counselors who are older, returning persons themselves. However, one of the most important factors to recognize is that a peer counselor will be more supportive for such a group. The re-entry older woman would feel more confortable with someone who is or has been through the process. She would not feel "dumb" asking questions.

We have also stated that most returning women start their educational process through the Division of Continuing Education. It is the policy at this institution is to have an administrator-in-charge at the various campus sites. However, counselors do not seem to be as readily available. We recognize that the administrators-in-charge are knowledgeable regarding programs, etc. at the institution, but the main concern is that these administrators are spending more time in checking to see that all rooms are being occupied, are closed, change of class location, etc. It is hard to find an administrator at times when the student has need of an immediate answer before classes or during the break period.

Career and Vocational Counseling

The majority of the target group have enrolled for the reason of career change and/or needs. Although we can consider that all students who enter an institution of higher education do so for career and vocational reasons, we must consider that in respect to career counseling for the returning women the needs are different than the 18-22 year old students.

Most returning women have a basic idea of what they would like to do. However, the most frequent problems they encounter are:

- A lack of information on career choices and options.
- Feelings of insecurity and self-doubt with respect to procuring employment.
- Being unfamiliar with the process of how to go about seeking and applying for a job.

The institution does have a Placement Office. However, we have noted that the majority of the target group had no basis for evaluation of this component. Let us consider how a returning woman would use this component. First of all, students have the access to MOIS (Massachusetts Occupational Information Service). This computer will give information regarding careers. Such information includes range of salary, schooling required, openings in specific geographic areas. This information is helpful. However, appointments must be made to use MOIS. The author has found that usually there is a backlog of appointments and/or MOIS is "down."

The listings of jobs are placed outside of the Placement Office. This component also arranges for on-campus recruiting by prospective employers. The important factor to be considered is that the institution should develop ways to encourage job recruiters to consider older women students. We are all ware that there is a law, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 that prohibits discrimination on the basis of age in programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance.[1] The act affects only those programs, such as higher education. However, the author has found that the private sector does discriminate, not only on the basis of sex, but on the basis of age. As institutions of higher education are serving more and more older students, consideration must be made to firm up the commitments with the private sector to hire these older graduates. The author recognizes that North Shore Community College has an excellent working relation with the private

1. Women's Educational Equity Act Program of the Department of Education, p. 7.

private sector and hopes that other institutions will follow suit.

Social Support Services

Let us examine some possibilities that the institution could do to provide a number of social support services for re-entry women.

The institution should develop a Continuing Education Center or Re-Entry Women's Program. This center should be staffed during the day and/or night by former or current re-entry students to talk to current and prospective students. Peer counseling could be utilized at these centers.

By using peer counselors who are currently enrolled as students, two issues could be addressed. First of all, the Human Services current students need field placements. This would present the opportunity for such a student, whether full time or continuing education. We recognize that at the present point in time Special Services (Motivation) do indeed use such students. However, there is usually only one opening for such field placements. We also recognize that some students have used the Special Services for work-study placements. What we want to stress is that Motivation only handles a certain number of students. By establishing a Continuing Education or Re-Entry Center, the institution could service more of the current students by providing them further field placements.

The institution should also develop lists of off-campus services. A possible list of services could be child care centers, emergency homemaker care, and social services. We have stated that our target group did not feel that child care services/information was needed. However, we must look beyond this research project and consider the 25-34 year old women who are re-entering school and would need such a service.

The important factor to consider is that returning women need support. They need encouragement from other people who have gone back to school. They need to be told that it is not strange for someone their age to consider such a step or to even be on a college campus. In other words, PEER COUNSELORS.

Alternative Options for Returning Women

Returning women have more responsibilities than the younger students. We must consider what options should be instituted for these students.

First of all, let us consider the full-time day returning woman student. Our analysis has shown that the majority of the target group had no basis for evaluation for many of the components of the College. Further study would have to be done to determine why this is a factor and also if this would relate to the majority of the student body.

The majority of the group is married and have family or outside work obligations. We see that this could interfere with portions of their schooling. Scheduling options could easily be altered to accomodate many of the adult students. Master schedules should be examined closely to see that classes that are necessary are not scheduled at a time that a returning woman would be unable to attend. Master Schedules are determined by Faculty signing up for the specific hours they wish to reach. Consideration should be taken for these women students. Although the majority of the target group did not have the problem of younger children, there have been instance when women students with school-age children have requested Directed Studies because the class they needed was scheduled at an early hour. (8:00 a.m. class) The requests were denied as they stated that they could not

attend the class due to the fact that they had problems getting to such an early class because of family responsibilities such as children going to school. (Children did not leave for school until 8:30 and the class began at 8:00 a.m.) This would not have been the case if the student had stated that there was a job/work conflict. It is the author's contention that the woman student's family responsibilities are just as much job related as a student who is working.

Another factor to consider is that Faculty usually have their office hours during the day between their own classroom schedules. Faculty members and administrators should be encouraged to consider scheduling office hours for those students who are part-time or Continuing Education students.

Continuing Education Options

We have stated that most Faculty do not have office hours for Continuing Education students. The author has found that most Continuing Education instructors usually give their students their day office hours, if they are full-time Faculty, and/or their home telephone numbers if they are Continuing Education Faculty. It is rather hard to discuss a problem with a Faculty member via the telephone - if you can reach them, expecially if the instructor is busy with his/her own family obligations.

Another factor to consider is that there are drawbacks to evening study related to scheduling. Student J. stated: "After getting home form work and fixing dinner, I barely had enough time to make my 7 pm class. The library closed at 9 pm just as my class would end. I found that I had to depend upon my local library for research material and this was not adequate."

The institution should respond to the Continuing Education students' needs. The following areas should be considered:

- open and close libraries and other services later on specific days.
- provide a separate orientation program for evening students.
- make sure that security problems are not discouraging returning women students from attending class in the evening.

Credit for Prior Learning

Experiential learning credit has become a new method for obtaining credit in the last few years. North Shore Community College has become a leader in experiential learning within the state community college and state college system. The Center for Alternative Studies not only offers the nontraditional options, but also has become a clearinghouse for those students who view themselves as non-traditional. The Center does help at least 1/3 of the students who do inquire regarding alternative options and refers the remaining 2/3's back to the appropriate College components or community resources.

Certain components of the College do not recognize experience credit for its entire worth. This is an area that needs to be defined further. Institutions need to be increasingly open to new strategies for presenting education to adult students. Therefore, experiential learning credit will allow the returning woman to return to school with recognized credit and will psychologically benefit her as she would feel that her time out of school has not been wasted. It is important that the institution take a closer look at experiential learning and re-define its goals. After all, the philosophy regarding experiential learning credit is that WHAT IS LEARNED IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN HOW IT IS LEARNED. If some departments can not recognize that experiential learning has value and if the Department Chairperson feels that

classroom or book learning is of more value, the institution could initiate a way to encompass both avenues. One way would be to accept some of the credits by experience credit petition and the remainder of the credits could be earned through some classroom time and/or testing options. What is of importance to remember is that over half of the colleges and universisites in the U.S. do accept some type of credit for experiential learning.

Another area that the institution should consider examining is the External Degree Program. Since the enrollment mix at most institutions is composed of a higher percent of older students than younger ones and since most of the students are working, the philosophy of external degree coursework should be considered. The Center for Alternative Studies fulfills a portion of this new philosophy at this point in time as its teaching-learning options are self-directed studies.

It is important to remember that the more demands a returning woman has on her time, the more flexibility she will need for a degree program. The institution should survey the community to determine if the external degree program should be initiated. There have been instancees where students have earned their degrees through external degrees at this institution. For example, one student received credits for experience credit, departmental examinations, transfer credits and one classroom situation. This student graduated with a 3.5+ cum. The institution should recognize that students who are doing such self-directed and/or external degree studies are more motivated than the students who are obtaining their education through classroom work-load. Self-directed studies are more demanding than regular classroom work and the student has to be highly self-disciplined.

We have only presented some recommendations. A further study would have to be done in order to research all the recommendations and/or problems dealing with the older returning woman student.

EVALUATION OF THE SOCIAL AND
ACADEMIC PROBLEMS OF THE
RETURNING WOMAN STUDENT (35+)

WORKING MODEL PROPOSALS

At this point, the author would like to present working models for the older returning woman student.

PEER SUPPORT SYSTEM

We have stated that the most important factor to consider is a support system - one that the older returning woman student could identify with. Let us consider the Peer Counseling System.

North Shore Community College should employ either through the work study program or through part-time employment, both during the day and evening hours, former or current students who have been or are in the system to be peer counselors.

The author feels that it is important to have such a system initiated. We have stated that word-of-mouth is the best public relations system an institution can have. Therefore, by having a peer counseling system, we are not only fulfilling the need of public relations, but are fulfilling the need of the older women students - that of building their self-esteem and confidence.

RETURNING STUDENT PROGRAM

Such a program should be initiated. The Re-Entry Program at North Shore Community College is open to all adults who have finished high school. It consists of a seminar, study techniques course and the students can take an additional course from any of the offerings. This program is offered through the Counsling Center. The author has noted that the Fall Semester, 1980's enrollment was low.

A Returning Student Program should be separate from the Counseling Center. It could give information and/or referrals as well as having peer counselors. It would help the recruitment and retention problem as well. It is unfortunate that most students who enter the world of higher education somehow get bogged down in red tape. It has been noted that students are shuffled from one office to another, trying to find the correct information they need. By having a specific service area for the older returning student, less time would be spent trying to locate the appropriate office and there would be less frustration upon the behalf of the student. If a student is shunted from one office to another, one could begin to wonder about the credibility of the institution.

SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS FOR RETURNING STUDENTS

At least half of the target group felt that there was such a need for this type of service. The author has attended the initial meeting of the Older Students' Group where the consensus of the group was to have a special publication. Such a project could be started and could be used as a field placement or as a Contract Learning course. Those students who are interested in writing, but find that the Pennon does not fulfill their interests, could be involved in a Contract Learning course under Faculty supervision and start such a project. The Human Services students could also do a field placement by being involved in research on such a project. There is a need for such a publication that would give on-campus and off-campus information to older students.

CAMPUS INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICE FOR RETURNING STUDENTS

Fifty-four percent of the target group stated a need for this information. The author feels at this point in time that the Center for Alternative Studies is fulfilling to a degree this need. However, the Center can not or should not be all things to everyone. This is an area that could be initiated and would enable students to fulfill a research project, thus gaining academic credit through Contract Learning.

GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH RETURNING WOMEN STUDENTS

The following guidelines could be initiated by establishing a peer counseling system and a returning student program:

- Provide a warm, supportive atmosphere for students.
- Provide information regarding programs and referral services to community agencies.
- Provide peer identification to lessen self-doubts and to build self-confidence of older students.

OLDER STUDENT HANDBOOK

Students who are interested in research and writing skills could gain academic credit via Contract Learning by preparing this support system. Let us examine some of the data that would be appropriate to the older returning woman student.

Medical care and information
Library facilities
Veterans' benefits
Hotline for women
Workshops for returning women
HELP Center--peer counseling
Care care information
Legal advice information
Testing options
Family/personnel counseling:in-house,community
Financial Aid/scholarships
Resource persons for returning women
Tutoring information
Lab information
External degree information
Community resource information

The Campus Information and Referral Service could be incorporated into the Handbook. However, check sheets should be established to be used by peer counselors in the program which would establish a statistical analysis as well as allowing for follow-up of potentail students.

RETURNING WOMEN PROGRAM ( OR OLDER RETURNING STUDENT PROGRAM)

GOAL: To meet the academic and social needs of older women who are planning to enroll in institutions of higher education after being away from school for an extended period of time.

OBJECTIVES: To establish a low-cost program for returning women.

1. To implement a field-based experience for current students via work-study, Contract Learning, and/or field placement.

2. To establish a peer counseling system of former and/or current students.

   a. to offer leadership training opportunities for peer counselors.
      i. mini courses to be established by Counseling Center to train peer counselors to assist returning women.
      ii. mini course to be established for peer counselors to train in program-planning, assertiveness training, decision-making, problem-solving, and peer advising.
      iii. academic credit to be achieved by Contract Learning through the Center for Alternative Studies.

3. To provide information/referral services for returning women students.
   a. older student handbook
   b. workshops
      i. assertiveness training
      ii. academic skills courses
      iii. exam skills

   (The above to be implemented through the Academic Skills Center and Special Services.)

4. To provide services to potential older women students in the community.
   a. information/referral services
   b. outreach workshops
   c. brochure
   d. recruitment through community agencies

5. To provide College professionals and staff information regarding the needs of the older returning women students and how to deal with such needs.
   a. information/referral services
   b. newsletter
   c. workshops for all College personnel

BUDGET: To be equally shared by the Day Division and the Division of Continuing Education and Community Services.

The Program Coordinator should be a gradute of North Shore Community College and an older woman, one who has had dealings in the past with servicing students. Other staff members should include an Instructional Specialist for 20 hours per week for 42 weeks; a student coordinator who receives payment through the work-study program. Expenses should also be shared equally by both Divisions of the College. The hours should be established to have coverage during the day and evening hours.

IMPLEMENTATION: A mechanism should be worked out between the components of the College such as the Counseling Center, the Academic Skills Center, the Department Chairpersons and the Program Coordinator to establish a clear network. This would eliminate any dual offerings. For instance, if an older woman needs a resume prepared, the peer counselor would advise her of the Placement Office. If the student needs brushing up on writing skills, she would be referred to the Academic Skills Center.

RATIONALE: One could say that the student could find out this information in the College catalog. However, we must remember that we are dealing with a student who is unsure of herself, has low self-esteem, and does not like to appear "dumb." By talking to a peer counselor, the student's self-esteem is built up and she will not be as hesitant to approach the appropriate component. By servicing her needs, the College has made her a public-relations person. Thus, she becomes a recruitment tool.

| BUDGET: | Salaries |
|---|---|
| Program Coordinator ($250.00 per week) | $13,000.00 |
| Fringe 28.87 | 3,753.10 |
| | 16,753.10 |
| Instructional Specialist: $8.00 an hour for 20 hours per week for 42 weeks | 6,720.00 |
| Student Coordinator (Work-Study Student) | (2,800.00) (Maximum award) |
| | 26,275.10 |
| Expenses: | |
| Postage | 500.00 |
| Facilities | 900.00 |
| Telephone | 900.00 |
| Travel Expense | 200.00 |
| Publications | 200.00 |
| | $26,173.10 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Cost to Day Division | $13,086.55 |
| Cost to DCE | 13,086.55 |

EVALUATION OF THE SOCIAL AND
ACADEMIC PROBLEMS OF THE
RETURNING WOMAN STUDENT (35+)

In order to substantiate the author's hypothesis, we must first look at historical factors and the profile of the older returning woman student as presented by other documentations and analysis of the student questionnaire.

HISTORICAL FACTORS

The declining enrollment is a major concern of educators and institutions of higher learning. Fewer students are entering the undergraduate level of education directly from high school. It is generally acknowledged that each year the average age of students in higher education rises. At North Shore Community College, the average age for full-time students is 28+; while for the Division of Continuing Education, the average age is 35+. We must analyze why the average age is rising.

First, let us examine the enrollment mix. There are fewer students applying to institutions of higher learning directly from high school. This is a result of the decline in enrollments in the elementary and secondary schools. We have all been aware of the drop in the birth-rate during the last twenty years. We must also take into consideration the drop-out rate at the high school level. There are now more older students from the age of 25 to 50+ enrolling in institutions of higher learning. Most of these students have enrolled for the reason of career change and/or needs.[2] We will analyze this factor later on in this report.

The enrollment mix presents a problem of recruitment and retention as well as the fulfillment of FTE's (full-time equivalencies). This problem is not only faced by North Shore Community College but by all state colleges and universities. In order to eliminate this problem, we must consider the re-entry student. This is the market that higher education should concentrate on, considering the factor of declining enrollments in secondary schools. We must also consider the retention of this group of students. Therefore, by focusing on the older returning woman student, age 35+, we will examine and evaluate the social and academic problems. We will also examine and evaluate what the institution (North Shore Community College) is doing and/or can do to assist these students.

PROFILE OF THE OLDER RETURNING WOMAN STUDENT

It has been recognized by several institutions and educators that the older undergraduate student is significantly different from the younger student. Carol E. Kasworm of the College of Education, University of Texas at Austin, states: "the motivations, psychological development, academic readiness and life/time

2. U. S. Department of Labor, Wage, and Labor Standards Administration, Women's Bureau, "Trends in Educational Attainment of Women," April, 1978, p. 2.

commitments of older undergraduate students represent a unique composite of collegiate subcultural characteristics."[3] Kasworm adds that the older returning student has had a variety of experiences which reflect on sense of identity, responsibility for work, family; the ability to funcation as financially independent adults.[4]

Also in support of the author's hypothesis, J. O. Hooper and G. B. March have stated in the Journal of College Student Personnel:

> Many colleges and universities are still designed to serve a population of younger persons between the ages of 18 and 22 who live on or near the campus, who have no non-academic responsibilities, and who are supported by someone other than themselves. It is expected that the student will have time to attend classes, have adequate study skills, no outside responsibilities, money and an attitude toward education that embraces learning for its own sake.....[5]

Unfortunately, it is true that the mind-set of faculty, counselors, and administrators in some institutions have a pre-conceived view of college students - "Freddie Fraternity and Susie Sororiety." The returning student does not fit into this mold and does not, especially the female single parent student, meet every one of the cretieria as stated by Hooper and March. THE RE-ENTRY STUDENT HAS NUMEROUS OUTSIDE RESPONSIBILITIES, HER/HIS TIME IS LIMITED, STUDY SKILLS ARE EITHER VERY RUSTY OR THE STUDENT FEELS THAT THEY ARE, THE FINANCIAL SITUATION IS USUALLY INADEQUATE AT TODAY'S STANDARDS, AND THE MOTIVES FOR ACQUIRING AN EDUCATION ARE ALMOST ALWAYS EMPLOYMENT-PRIENTED.[6]

In order to arrive at a profile of the older returning woman student at North Shore Community College we must first examine the facts. Let us examine the enrollment for the Fall Semester, 1980. The total enrollment was 2652 full-time students. 1325 or 50% of these students were women. The total enrollment of women who were 35+ was 154 or 12% of the female population of the College. Therefore, the total enrollment of females, 20-34, was 1171 or 38%.

At this point in time, there is no base for determining the number of women and their ages for part-time day students or for students who enroll through the Division of Continuing Education as the exact statistical data is not yet available. However, as the result of personal contact by talking with numbers of students participating in registration, the assumption is that the majority of older women, due to family situtations, enroll either as part-time day or as Continuing Education students.

3. Carol E. Kasworm, "Student Services for the Older Undergraduate Student," Journal of College Student Personnel, March, 1980, p. 163.

4. Kasworm, p. 163.

5. J. O. Hooper and G. B. March, "The Female Single Parent in the University," Journal of College Student Personnel, March, 1980, p. 142.

6. Hooper, March, p. 142

The student questionnaire was administered to 50 older women students at North Shore Community College. These students were picked at random, either by direct contact or from referrals from counselors and Faculty members. 37 or 47% of the students responded. 7 or 19% of the 37 students were enrolled through the Division of Continuing Education, 30 or 81% were enrolled either full-time or part-time days, and 1 or 3% was a potential student.

From the questionnaire results we can arrive at a profile of the older returning woman student at North Shore Community College. Let us examine questions three through nine in particular.

Question #3 asked the student's age. The average age was 44.62; the mode was 36.

Question #4 asked the level of schooling prior to North Shore Community College enrollment. 24 or 65% of the individuals finished high school; 2 or 5% have had some high school; 8 or 22% passed the GED examinations; and 3 or 18% have had some college courses.

Question #5 requested the marital status. 17 or 46% were married; 3 or 8% were separated; 12 or 32% were divorced; 1 or 3% was single; and 4 or 11% were widowed.

Question #6 requested the number of children. The average number of children was 3.16; the mode was 2.

Question #7 asked how old are the children. There were 51 responses. 2 or 4% had pre-school age children; 12 or 24% had grade school age children; 15 or 29% had high school age children; and 22 or 43% had children who are older than high school age.

Question #8 asked how long the student had been away from school before present enrollment at the College. The average number of years away was 24.6; the mode was 30 years.

Question #9 asked what prompted the student to go the college. 25 or 68% specified career needs/changes; 7 or 18% specified personal fulfillment; and 5 or 15% specified to further their general knowledge.

From this information, we can arrive at a composite picture of the older returning woman student at North Shore Community College. SHE IS 44+, HAS FINISHED HIGH SCHOOL, IS EITHER MARRIED OR DIVORCED, HAS 3.16 CHILDREN WHO ARE OLDER THAN HIGH SCHOOL AGE, HAS BEEN OUT OF SCHOOL FOR 24.6 YEARS, AND NEEDS CAREER CHANGES/NEEDS.

This profile is indicative of the changing socio-economic factors of the 80's. Double digit inflation has forced many married women to enter the work world in order to supplement the family income in order to maintain a reasonable standard of living. According to the President's Commission, other reasons for women to seek further education are:

- Those who are divorced or widowed often must cope to support themselves and others.
- Those who are on welfare can not cope with the sub-standard monetary system of welfare.
- Education can update job skills that have been made obsolete by technological, scientific, or other advances.
- Women who are working usually find themselves dead-ended in a work position as they do not have the educational credentials to become upgraded.
- They do not possess any marketable skills. 7

Institutions must also be aware that as we proceed into the 80's, major trends are emerging that must be considered as catalysts for the renewal and revitilization of community colleges. William M. Randle, Jr. stated in an article in the Boston Sunday Globe:

> "A greater increased number of women are actively determined to obtain the economic advantages and status benfits of higher education.....There is an influx of a new blue-collar clientele, as the myth of working-class affluence erodes under the pressure of economic and high technology realiities..." 8

Randle further states that institutions should expand the educational opportunities to meet the needs of retiring professionals, workers who are displaced, those whose skills are obsolete and who need training, liberal-arts B.A.'s who want specific career training, and in general, the growing number of people who want a college degree. 9

There have been many such articles and research projects presented on the subject of the older student. We can read these articles and reports and in essence agree with them. However, the point that most institutions must not forget is that RECRUITMENT and RETENTION has become a major problem. Therefore, since the fact that more and more women are entering the institutions of higher education and that such enrollment will have an observable effect, current statistics will not begin to reflect the increase coming in the next decade. We must service the existing students now. We recognize the problem and the next step is to address the problem.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Institutions, struggling to meet enrollment goals, should have reason to be concerned in regard to their recruiting strategies and methods. Perhaps they should look at the positive and negative experiences of re-entry students at their insitituion. Institutions should also be concerned with the issue of retaining these students.

In order to analyze recruitment methods at North Shore Community College, information was needed as to how the students in this target group can be recruited and

7. The President's Commission on the Status of Women, "Continuing Education Programs and Services for Women," 1979, p. 2.

8. William M. Randle, Jr., "It's High Time Community Colleges Came of Age," The Boston Sunday Globe, March 15, 1981, p. 74.

9. Randle, Jr., p. 74.

maintained in the system. In order to establish a base, the following questions were asked.

Question #10 asked why the student decided to enroll at North Shore Community College. 31 or 48% stated that the location/convenience prompted them; 2 or 6% stated that the Motivation Program interested them; 2 or 5% stated that the cost of tuition was the deciding factor; and 2 or 5% had taken sample courses.

Let us examine the location/convenience factor further. 3 or 8% were from Wenham; 1 or 3% was from Nahant; 7 or 19% were from Beverly; 12 or 32% were from Lynn; 5 or 14% were from Salem; 2 or 5% were from Gloucester; 2 or 5% were from Danvers; 4 or 11% were from Peabody; and 1 or 3% was from Saugus. Of the 37 students interviewed, 8 or 22% were taking classes in Lynn. Therefore, 29 or 78% of the students interviewed were serviced through the Beverly campus.

We can presume that those students who live in the proximity of Lynn and who were taking classes in Beverly were doing so because the courses were not offered in Lynn. We can also presume that when the new campus is completed in Lynn, those students will take their classes in Lynn. However, we also recognize that the new Lynn campus will only service 1000 students. In reviewing the above statistics, we can see that 54% of the target group were serviced in Beverly, although Beverly might not have been the choice campus location for some. We will discuss this factor further on in the report.

Question #11 asked if the student received any information about the College before she decided to enroll, and if so, how or from whom. 25 or 68% of the students stated they had received information; 12 or 32% stated they had not. We will analyze the percentage of those receiving information further on in this report to determine if the information received was effective.

Out of the 25 who answered yes, 2 or 8% received information from the College catalogs; 3 or 13% received information from friends; 6 or 25% received information from other students; 5 or 14% from NSCC staff; 2 or 8% from newspaper ads; 3 or 13% from the Economic Opportunity Center in Lynn; 1 or 4% from her children; 1 or 4% via mailings; and 1 or 4% picked it up along the way.

We can see that the best public relations for the College is current or former students: 42%. In order to attract more students, we must service our existing students. "Word-of-mouth factors play a heavy role in adult recruitment. An institution's credibility can be greatly enhanced or diminished through the 'grape-vine' network. Therefore, colleges should endeavor to develop an environment that will assure a satisfying academic experience for re-entry students." [10]

The Women's Educational Equity Act Program of the Department of Education developed a paper under a federal grant. One section of this grant dealt with the admissions of the re-entry women. One of the specific strategies that the institutions can do

10. William A. Robbins, etal, "Strategies for Serving the Re-Entry Adult Student in Community Colleges," The Community Services Catalyst, Fall, 1980, Volume X, Number 3, National Council on Community Services and Continuing Education, p. 25.

is to check with current re-entry women students to find out what kinds of information they found helpful or lacking.[11]

In order to determine this, Question #12 asked the students if they were aware of the options and/or help available to them at the College. 20 or 54% stated they were aware of the options; 9 or 24% stated no; and 8 or 22% stated that they were aware of some or very few of the options. We will analyze the data of those who answered yes further on in this report. We will also address the problem of retention later on.

SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC PROBLEMS

In order to determine the social and academic problems of our target group, we need to know some facts about the returning woman - such as what program she enrolled in and why she chose this program.

Question #13 asked what program the student was in or wished to enroll in. 14 or 38% were enrolled in General Studies; 4 or 10% were enrolled in Business Transfer Program; 6 or 16% were enrolled in Human Services; 8 or 22% were enrolled in Business Career Programs; 1 or 3% was enrolled in the Motivation Program; 1 or 3% was enrolled in the Occupational Therapy Program; 1 or 3% was enrolled in the Nursing Program; and 2 or 5% was unsure of what program to enroll in.

Question #14 asked how or why the student chose this program. 3 or 8% stated the transferability of the program; 3 or 8% stated personal fulfillment; 8 or 22% stated it was work experience related; 5 or 14% stated to help others; 3 or 8% stated it was recommended to them; 7 or 19% stated because of special interest; 3 or 8% stated the flexibility of the program; 1 or 3% was unsure of a career program; and 4 or 10% did not answer the question.

We can see that the largest percentages were in General Studies, Business Careers, and Human Services. Those students who enrolled in the Business Careers and Human Services Programs would be ready for employment upon graduation. A further study would have to be completed involving those students who were enrolled in the General Studies to determine if they were going on to a four year institution and to determine what their long-range goals are as to the world of work. At this point in time, the author will not expand her research into this area.

In order to establish the academic problems, we must examine the following questions.

Question #15 asked what classroom format did the student find most difficult. There were 47 responses to this question. 4 or 7% found research on their own the most difficult; 5 or 10% found group projects the most difficult; 22 or 39% found examinations the most difficult; 17 or 30% found writing papers the most difficult; and 8 or 14% found lectures the most difficult.

11. Women's Educational Equity Act Program of the Department of Education, "Field Evaluation Draft, Recruitment and Admissions: Opening the Door for Re-Entry Women."

Question #16 asked what courses are easy, average, and hardest for the student. The following chart indicates each category and the number of answers.

| Easy | Average | Hardest |
|---|---|---|
| English - 11 | English - 9 | English - 1 |
| Psychology - 7 | Psychology - 4 | Psychology - 3 |
| Math - 2 | Math - 7 | Math - 9 |
| Science - 3 | Biology - 1 | Science Courses - 4 |
| History - 3 | History - 1 | History - 1 |
| Literature - 2 | Business Law - 1 | Study Skills - 1 |
| Art - 1 | Business Core Courses - 1 | Economics - 1 |
| Secretarial Courses - 3 | | Secretarial Courses - 2 |
| All courses - 2 | | Data Processing - 2 |
| Sociology - 1 | | Philosophy - 1 |
| Mental Health Courses - 1 | | Intermediate Accounting - 1 |
| Accounting - 1 | | |

Let us examine this list further. We can see that there are five areas that are repeated.

| | Total Responses | Easy | Average | Hardest |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Psychology | 14 | 7 or 50% | 4 or 29% | 3 or 21% |
| Science Courses | 8 | 3 or 37% | 1 or 13% | 4 or 50% |
| English | 23 | 11 or 48% | 9 or 39% | 3 or 13% |
| Math | 18 | 2 or 11% | 7 or 39% | 9 or 50% |
| Secretarial Courses | 5 | 3 or 60% | | 2 or 40% |

We will have to analyze this data further to see if those that found courses easy and average did so because the courses were job related. Those that found math the hardest represents at least 50% of the responses. We would have to analyze this group further to see what the previous schooling was as well as taking into consideration the number of years away from school. Another factor we must consider is what type of courses did this group take while in high school. Thirty years ago, a student either took courses that would prepare her to enter college or took business courses to enable her to go to work. Therefore, since the majority of our target group have been primarily non-working homemakers, we can presume that, even if they had worked at some point in time, the knowledge gained so many years ago has not been updated or reinforced until they entered North Shore Community College.

Recognizing the fact that for most students Faculty are the first contact they have with the academic world, the author decided to find out how this group felt about Faculty. It is easy enough for a new student to go through the assessment process, but until the student is in the classroom she cannot get a feel for the educational process she will be involved in. Students also have more interface with Faculty than with other components of an institution. Therefore, the following questions were asked.

Question #17 asked if the student found Faculty helpful in bridging this first sector of her learning experience. 20 or 54% responded yes; 4 or 11% responded sometimes; 2 or 5% responded that very few were helpful; 2 or 5% responded not often; and 3 or 8% responded no. 6 or 17% did not answer the question.

Question #18 asked how the student perceived the Faculty's view of her as a student. The answers were so varied that it was very difficult to try to combine like answers. 4 or 11% felt that Faculty viewed them as serious students; 1 or 3% felt that Faculty

viewed them as all other students; 2 or 5% felt that Faculty viewed them as inferior or non-existent; 2 or 5% felt that it was hard to tell with some of the Faculty; 19 or 52% gave inappropriate answers; 7 or 19% did not answer or just did not know. We will compare these answers further on when we deal with the Faculty responses to the question of their evaluation of the women students.

Returning women are "non-traditional" students. As most of the returning women are mothers, the author felt it was important to find out if these women were accepted by their younger compatriots. Therefore, the following questions were asked.

Question #19 asked if younger students accepted her as a classmate or did they "keep aloof" due to her age. 33 or 90% stated that the younger students accepted them as a classmate; 2 or 5% stated that the younger student was "aloof" at first; and 2 or 5% stated that the younger students did not accept them as a classmate.

Question #20 asked if she made an attempt to bridge the age gap, and if so, on their terms or hers. 25 or 68% stated they made the attempt to bridge the age gap and 10 or 32% stated they did not make the attempt. Of the 25 students who responded yes, the following statements were made in response to "on whose terms": 4 or 16% stated in both the younger student and their own terms; 13 or 52% stated there was no age gap; 5 or 20% stated on her terms; 3 or 12% stated they made the attempt only when it related to classwork.

It is important to note that the majority of the women did not feel uncomfortable with the younger students and that there was no age gap. As we do not know how the younger students feel in regard to having older students in their classes, it is hard to analyze this data and give a conclusion.

As we have stated before, the returning woman does not meet the criteria that many colleges and universities perceive as what their students' responsibilities and attitudes toward education should be. The returning woman has family and financial responsibilities that will be with her even as she spends time in classes and in studying. In order to determine just how these responsibilities or problems affect the returning woman student, the following questions were asked.

Question #21 asked if any problems at home interferred with her performance as a student. 15 or 41% stated yes, 15 or 41% stated no; 6 or 16% stated not usually, but sometimes; and 1 or 2% did not answer the question.

Of the 21 responding yes or sometimes, there were 27 responses identifying the problems. 11 or 41% stated family problems; 2 or 15% stated financial problems; 4 or 15% stated illness/emotional problems; 2 or 7% stated the scheduling of classes; and 6 or 22% stated role changes. We will analyze this data further when we analyze the questions asked of counselors.

Question #23 asked if the student would be willing to identify some of the support mechanisms she had at home. 21 or 57% stated that friends and family were the support mechanisms; 16 or 43% did not answer.

We can see, therefore, that although the student has problems that can interfere with her performance as a student, she can count on her friends and family to give her the support she needs. Once the returning woman has made the decision to return to school, she needs all the encouragement and help she can get in order to perform at her best. Usually it is a family decision to help her succeed in this new venture. However, the student also needs the encouragement and help at the

institution. She needs the recognition and encouragement from academia. We will analyze further on in this report to see if the student does receive the encouragement and help at the institution.

The author also felt it was important to find out how these women responded academically. Question #24 asked if the student found a hesitancy to express a viewpoint on subject matter in class. 8 or 22% stated yes, 4 or 11% stated at times; and 25 or 67% stated no. Of the 12 individuals who responded yes or at times, the following reasons were given: 11 or 92% stated lack of self-confidence and 1 or 8% did not know why she hesitated. We will compare these statistics further on with the statistics from the Faculty to see if indeed the majority of returning women express viewpoints.

It is a known fact that returning women have a wealth of life and work experience. In order to substantiate this, the following questions were asked.

Question #25 asked if the student was now working or had previously worked. 33 or 89% stated yes and 4 or 11% stated no.

Question #26 asked if the student had been involved in any volunteer work. 29 or 78% stated yes and 8 or 22% stated no.

Question #27 asked if previous work and life experiences helped the student to adjust to college life. 30 or 81% stated yes and 7 or 19% stated no or did not answer.

Question #28 asked if they (life experiences) enhanced any of the student's courses. 26 or 70% stated yes and 11 or 30% stated no. Of the 26 who answered yes, the following ways were stated: 5 or 19% stated that it made core courses easier; 9 or 35% stated it helped them with most learning situations; 9 or 35% stated they had a wider general knowledge of things; and 3 or 11% stated it had given them confidence in themselves.

We can see that the majority of the students in the target group found that their work and life experiences were helpful to them. Those that found it made core courses easier drew on this wealth of experiential learning. Since the returning woman has spent a great deal of her life prior to college either working or doing volunteer work, a greater emphasis must be placed upon experiential learning. These students should be able to receive credits for their valuable and viable work/life experiences. There seems to be no problem for men and women who have worked and are enrolled in a career program such as Electro-Mechanical Technology or Allied Health to obtain experience credits. The instructors and department heads in such disciplines do recognize the viability of such non-traditional learning. However, if women and men have had experiences that relate to human services, they are usually denied the option of experience credit. This can also apply to some of the business areas. It is important that the institution re-deine these areas. We recognize that it is important to take the courses which focus on theories. But we also recognize that for these women involved in, for example, human services volunteer and/or work, the theories are learned after the fact. While there are mechanisms and guidelines for human services and psychology departments regarding credit for experiential learning, students are not encouraged and often are discouraged because they have not yet taken theory courses. Although experiential learning is still considered a new concept by most institutions, we must recognize that many of the re-entry women did not follow the traditional route of obtaining a college degree.

"Within the last few years, a new method for obtaining credit has gained wide acceptance. Called 'credit for esperiential learning', this option is based solely on what has been learned outside the classroom."[12]

We have seen in our composite picture of the re-entry woman that she is not the traditional student. The following figure describes characteristics of two types.

FIGURE I: WHAT IS A NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENT?[13]

| FIRST GROUP | SECOND GROUP |
|---|---|
| 1. Over 20, highly motivated | 1. Older (49's, 50's and younger 16+) |
| 2. Reasonably articulate | 2. Skills deficient or excelling |
| 3. Meets academic requirements | 3. Does not meet academic requirements |
| 4. Some degree of self-confidence | 4. Low self-confidence |
| 5. Low or middle income | 5. Low or high income |
| 6. Married or displaced homemaker with emotional and financial support | 6. Married or displaced homemaker with little financial or emotional support |
| 7. Does not have academic credentials and wants to advance on the job | 6. Being passed over for promotion and frustrated because of inadequate credentials-or is anxious about a younger 'non-educated' population taking jobs |
| 8. Some practical work/volunteer/ leisure experiences that he/she feels good about | 8. Some work/volunteer/leisure practical experience that they do not feel was worthwhile |

We can see from the above figure that our returning woman student could fit into steps of each group.

SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF THE RETURNING WOMAN STUDENT

Let us explore another area of college-life and investigate the viability of the social aspects of the institution. The following questions were asked:

Question #29 asked if the student had been involved in any social aspects of the College. 32 or 86% stated no and 5 or 14% stated yes. Of the 32 that stated

12. Women's Educational Equity Act Program of the Department of Education,"Field Evaluation Draft: Obtaining a Degree: Alternative Options for Re-Entry Women," Washington, D.C. p. 5.

13. Anita P. Turner, etal, "Street Smart," Workshop presented by the Center for Alternative Studies, North Shore Community College at the National Council of Community Services and Continuing Education National Conference, October 20,21,22, 1980

no, 29 or 92% stated they did not have the time and 3 or 8% stated they did not need or desire the social aspects. Of the 5 who stated yes, 3 or 60% stated they wanted to be involved in all aspects of the College and wanted to enjoy this part of the college-life; 2 or 40% stated they needed it for support.

We can see that the largest majority of our target group did not have the time nor the desire to be involved in social aspects. Further analysis of the younger female students should be done to be able to compare the two groups.

Every student pays $20.00 Student Activities Fee and a $3.20 Insurance Fee. Even part-time students pay for these fees at a reduced rate. The insurance fee can be waived if the student has other insurance, but the student activities fee must be paid. Granted these fees pay for the Student Activities Programs, but what must be taken into consideration is what porportion of the entire study body is using the programs. When we examine the Student Association Budget (See Figure II, page we can see that only 10% of the budget is allocated for the Women's Interest Center.

> "The social activities of an institution should be analyzed and re-defined. These mandatory services need to be either modified or there should be a differing fee structure available for those students who do not use the services."[14]

One such example would be the Athletics and Recreation Program. It can be said that these services are available for our target group and that it is their option whether or not they use them. However, why should all students pay this mandatory fee for such services if they do not have the time or need. Secondly, we must take into consideration that the institution is a community college - a commuting college. The author has found that the number of students attending the College functions, such as the dances or plays, is minute in comparison to the entire study body.

INFORMATION AND SERVICES

> "As older undergraduate students continue to gain greater prominence, student personnel and academic support staff should continue to research, re-define, and create services and resources for this new undergraduate sub-culture."[15]

Current services can either be partially inappropriate or have no relevance to the older returning student. The adjustment and assimilation needs of the older student requires a completely unique focus and structure. In order to determine whether the services and information that are considered relevant to students are needed by returning women, the students in this project were asked to evaluate their personal need for help or further information and services in the following areas.

Financial Aid: 5 or 14% did not answer; 11 or 30% stated no need; 7 or 18% stated little need; 9 or 24% stated marked need; and 5 or 14% stated excessive need.

We can see that 38% of the target group need some form of financial aid. As the majority of the women in this project are married, we can assume that the 48% who stated no need/little need are not eligible for financial aid and/or they are paying for their own education. However, we must take into consideration that the tuition at a community college level is not as expensive as a four-year institution. We can only speculate on what the response would be for the 48% who stated no need/little need would be if they were enrolled in a four-year institution. Only 5% of the

14. Kasworm, p. 168

15. Kasworm, p. 168

FIGURE II

STUDENT ASSOCIATION BUDGET SUMMARY SHEET
As of September 30, 1980

| ACCOUNTS | INITIAL BUDGET | INCOME | PURCHASE ORDERS | PAYMENT | AVAILABLE BALANCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pennon/Newspaper | $12,390.00 | 75.00 | $3,176.00 | $ 1,128.00 | $ 8,161.00 |
| Student Senate | 2,300.00 | | 150.00 | 73.00 | 2,077.00 |
| Program Council | 14,679.00 | 433.00 | 1,291.60 | 2,213.50 | 11,606.90 |
| Performing Arts Council | 8,987.00 | | | 600.00 | 8,387.00 |
| Student Assoc. Operating Exp. | 26,640.00 | 287.78 | 1,296.48 | 3,472.37 | 22,158.93 |
| Athletics and Recreation | 19,854.00 | | 183.39 | 676.12 | 18,994.49 |
| Women's Interest Center | 8,400.00 | | 18.00 | 249.85 | 8,132.15 |
| Lynn Activities | 2,500.00 | 26.25 | 150.00 | 10.00 | 2,366.25 |
| Club Funds | 750.00 | | | | 750.00 |
| Handbook | 800.00 | | | | 800.00 |
| | $97,300.00 | $822.03 | $6,265.47 | $ 8,422.84 | $83,433.72 |
| Encumbered Funds/ Prior Year | 13,051.64 | | 1,840.10 | 11,973.97 | (762.43) |
| Medical Insurance Payable | 3,712.83 | | | | 3.712.83 |
| Special Projects 89-81 | 5,953.53 | | | | 5,953.53 |
| Independent Clubs | 1,180.61 | 342.64 | | | 1,523.25 |
| Staff Development | 762.56 | | | 140.33 | 622.23 |
| | $121,961.17 | $1,164.67 | 8,105.57 | 20,537.14 | 94,483.13 |
| Earned Fees | (83,200.00) | 32,974.04 | | 260.00 | (50,485.96) |
| Interest Earned | ( 2,600.00) | 139.88 | | | ( 2,460.12) |
| | $ 36,161.17 | $34,278.59 | $8,105.57 | $20,797.14 | $41,537.05 |

target group had stated that the tuition was the deciding factor for enrollment. Also, we can not state that the statistics given in response of this area can be conclusive. Further research would have to be done for those women who are going part-time. We also could not get data on those who are on AFDC. Therefore our statistics are inclusive.

Counseling: Education/Vocational: 6 or 16% did not answer; 6 or 16% stated no need; 7 or 19% stated little need; 14 or 41% stated marked need; and 3 or 8% stated excessive need.

We can see that 49% of the target group stated marked/excessive need and 51% stated no need/little need/did not answer. Therefore, at least half of the target group were sure of the direction they were pursuing in their educational/vocational career. Further study would have to be done to identify which program reflects those individuals who did not need counseling as well as wich program for those who did need counseling.

Credit by Examination; Credit for Life Experience: 9 or 24% did not answer; 2 or 5% stated no need; 6 or 16% stated little need; 12 or 32% stated marked need; and 8 or 23% stated excessive need.

We can see that 55% stated marked/excessive need. Again, further study would have to be done to determine the feasibility and viability of experience credit/examinations for the program of these individuals. We also must take into consideration the 24% that did not answer the question. Further study would have to be done to see if this percentage had any knowledge regarding experiential learning.

Academic Skills courses/workshops: 7 or 18% did not answer; 6 or 16% stated no need; 13 or 36% stated little need; 8 or 22% stated marked need; and 3 or 8% stated excessive need.

We can see that the majority of the target group had little or no need for academic skills courses/workshops. However, we have noted that 39% of the target group found that examinations were the most difficult of classroom format and 30% found that writing papers was the most difficult. What is important to note is that 30% of the target group did state a marked/excessive need.

Personal/Social Counseling: 8 or 23% did not answer; 8 or 23% stated no need; 11 or 29% stated little need; 7 or 17% stated marked need; and 3 or 8% stated excessive need.

We can see that the majority of the target group did not need personal/social counseling. We have stated that 57% of the target group stated that friends and family were the support mechanisms. As only 25% stated a marked/excessive need, further research would need to be done as to what this group wanted and why.

Assertiveness Training Workshops/Courses: 7 or 19% did not answer; 10 or 28% stated no need; 4 or 11% stated little need; 11 or 31% stated marked need; and 4 or 11% stated excessive need.

We can see that 42% of the target group stated a marked/excessive need for assertiveness training. This statistic seems to contradict previous answers given by the target group when questioned about hesitancy to express a viewpoint. 67% of the target group stated they did not hesitate. Further study would have to be done in this area to determine why these individuals feel they need this training and in what area.

Off-Campus Placement and/or Jobs: 6 or 17% did not answer; 11 or 30% stated no need; 8 or 23% stated little need; 5 or 13% stated marked need; and 6 or 17% stated excessive need.

We can see that the majority of the target group did not need this information at this point in time. It would be helpful to know at what point these individuals are in their educational plans.

Test-anxiety Reduction Workshops: 8 or 23% did not answer; 7 or 17% stated no need; 4 or 11% stated little need; 14 or 40% stated marked need; and 5 or 15% stated excessive need.

We can see that 55% of the target group stated a marked/excessive need for this type of workshop. We have noted that 39% of the target group stated that examinations were the most difficult for them.

Group Support System: 7 or 17% did not answer; 7 or 17% stated no need; 4 or 11% stated little need; 14 or 40% stated marked need; and 5 or 15% stated excessive need.

We can see that 55% of the target group stated a marked/excessive need for a support group. We will analyze components of the College that could be considered as as fulfilling this need further on in this report.

Health Services: 7 or 17% did not answer; 13 or 36% stated no need; 9 or 25% stated little need; 5 or 14% stated marked need; and 3 or 8% stated excessive need.

We note that the majority of the group did not need health services. As the majority of this target group is married, we can presume that they have their own physicians or health care system. Of the 22% that stated a marked/excessive need, a further study would have to be done as to why and for what reasons they felt there was such a need.

Athletic and Social Services/activities: 6 or 17% did not answer; 20 or 54% stated no need; 7 or 18% stated little need; and 4 or 11% stated marked need. No one answered excessive need.

We can note that the majority of the group stated they did not need this service. We have stated that 86% of the target group have not been involved in any social activities of the College. Further study would have to be done to see why 11% of the target group answered 11% marked need and what they actually needed.

Child Care Services/Information: 6 or 17% did not answer; 22 or 59% stated no need; 3 or 8% stated little need; 4 or 11% stated marked need; and 2 or 5% stated excessive need.

As we can see, the majority of the group did not feel this service was needed. Since we are researching a specific age group (35+), there would not be a need for this service as the majority of this group responded that they had children who were older than high-school age. However, we must take into consideration the remainder of the female population, ages 20-34. There have been many requests for such a service from students. The need for such services are also recognized by several Faculty members.

Orientation Program for Students Returning to College After a Break in Their Schooling: 6 or 16% did not answer; 9 or 24% stated no need; 4 or 11% stated little need; 8 or 22% stated marked need; and 10 or 27% stated excessive need.

We can see that the majority of the group stated a marked/excessive need for this program. Further study would have to be done for that portion of the group who stated that they had no or little need for this service in order to determine why and how they became aware of the College and the services.

Special Publications for Returning Women: 6 or 17% did not answer; 6 or 17% stated no need; 5 or 15% stated little need; 10 or 27% stated marked need; and 9 or 24% stated excessive need.

We can see that at least half of the target group expressed a need for a special publication for returning women and at least half expressed that they did not need this. Further study must be done to determine what kind of information is needed by this group and also why half of the target group felt this was not a need.

Campus Information and Referral Service for Returning Students: 5 or 14% did not answer; 9 or 24% stated no need; 3 or 8% stated little need; 11 or 30% stated marked need; and 9 or 24% stated excessive need.

We can see that 54% of the target group stated a need for this information. The staff at the Center for Alternative Studies has recognized the fact that this group is considered as "non-traditional" and "alternative." Therefore such a service is important for this group of students.

> "We feel that, at this point in time, 'alternative' is a catch-all. There have been more inquiries that should have been handled at the other components of the College. We also feel at this time that if the word 'alternative' is used by students who see themselves as 'non-traditional', the other components of the College transfer the telephone call or send the students to us. Although we do not object to the large number of students who do inquire, we feel that in many situations the student is not ready to be involved in alternative studies. We, therefore, refer them to the appropriate component of the College. This is causing a duplication of services.
>
> Recommendation: To better define the role of the Center for Alternative Studies for students, components of the College and the community-at-large." [16]

Leadership and Communications Skills Courses for Returning Students: 6 or 17% did not answer; 9 or 24% stated no need; 5 or 15% stated little need; 9 or 24% stated marked need; and 8 or 22% stated excessive need.

We can note that 46% of the target group stated a marked/excessive need for this service or information. We will analye this factor further when we analyze the components of the College.

16. Anita P. Turner, "Center for Alternative Studies, Annual Report, FY 80, July 1, 1979-June 30, 1980." p. 15.

It must also be notated that the students listed the following additional comments as perceived needs:

> Rap sessions, better transportation, exercise and fitness program, relaxation program, better information for part-time students, external degree programs, and a peer system.

The students were also asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed on the following statements:

I returned to school to learn a skill in order to prepare me for a career:

5 or 14% did not answer; 17 or 46% strongly agreed; 5 or 14% agreed; 3 or 8% were neutral; 4 or 10% disagreed; and 3 or 8% strongly disagreed.

I returned to school so that I could advance within my career:

7 or 19% did not answer; 12 or 32% strongly agreed; 7 or 19% agreed; 1 or 3% was neutral; 4 or 11% disagreed; and 6 or 16% strongly disagreed.

I returned to school so that I could make more money:

6 or 16% did not answer; 11 or 30% strongly agreed; 6 or 16% agreed; 4 or 11% were neutral; 6 or 16% disagreed; and 4 or 11% strongly disagreed.

I returned to school for my own personal fulfillment:

4 or 11% did not answer; 20 or 54% strongly agreed; 9 or 24% agreed; 2 or 5% were neutral; 1 or 3% disagreed; and 1 or 3% strongly disagreed.

I returned to school to futher my general knowledge:

6 or 16% did not answer; 15 or 41% strongly agreed; 13 or 35% agreed; 1 or 3% was neutral; and 2 or 5% strongly disagreed.

We can note that the majority of the target group agreed with the above statements. Not only was this group interested in career needs/changes, but personal fulfillment and furthering their general knowledge was just as important to them.

COUNSELING OF THE RETURNING WOMAN STUDENT

Counseling is an area that must be considered. The returning woman wants "counseling by qualified persons, that is, by those competent to advise them about their educational and employment plans."[17]

College counselors have spent most of their time working with the younger student who does not have the special problems and needs associated with family responsibilities and the re-entry into academic and work worlds at a mature age. The question that needs to be raised and answered is - how many counselors are aware of the existing

17. Report of the Committee on Education to the President's Commission on the Status of Women, October, 1963, p. 8.

services and facilities, institutionally and in the community that could help the returning woman in solving her problems. In order to determine if the counseling staff at North Shore Community College are aware of the special problems of the returning woman and if the needs are being fulfilled, the author compiled a questionnaire for counselors. (See Figure IV, Appendix) The questionnaire was sent to nine counselors at North Shore Community College. Eight of the nine or 89% responded.

Question #1 asked do you have older women students asking for counseling: 8 or 100% stated yes.

Question #2 asked can you give a percentage: The average percentage was 47%. 3 or 43% stated they could not give a percentage.

Question #3 asked do they ask for academic of personal counseling: 7 or 88% stated both and 1 or 12% stated academic only.

Let us analyze the responses from the target groups as to needs. 49% of this group expressed a marked/excessive need for educational/vocational counseling and 25% stated a marked/excessive need for personal/social counseling. If the average percentage of older women asking for counseling was 47%, then of the 154 full-time older women students, according to this percentage, only 72.4 would have asked for counseling. If we use the average percentage to see how many of our target group would be asking for counseling, we would arrive at a figure of 18 individuals - approximately the number of individuals who stated they had an excessive/marked need. We will analyze this data further when we analyze the evaluation of the components of the College.

However, let us examine personal counseling. We must consider the answers given by the target group as to any problems at home that interfered with her performance as a student. 41% or 15 stated that problems did interfere. 57% of this group also stated that friends and family were the support mechanism. Counselors, however, have stated that 88% asked for both academic and personal counseling. But we must consider that 10 or 25% of the target group stated a marked/excessive need for personal counseling, while 19 or 52% stated no or little need for this service. Therefore, the majority of this target group is not using this service.

Question #4 asked how do you rate their motivation: 4 or 50% stated high, 2 or 25% stated very good; 1 or 12% stated excellent; and 1 or 13% stated very strong.

Question #3 asked do you find them secure in their commitment: 4 or 50% stated yes, 2 or 25% stated not always, and 2 or 25% stated no or did not answer. The question also asked if not, why. There were 6 responses. 2 or 33% stated low self-esteem; 2 or 33% stated family problems; 1 or 17% stated guilt about going to school; and 1 or 17% stated that the College fails to accept them as adults.

We can see that the counselors' rating of the returning women students' motivation was 100%. However, only 50% of the counselors found that the returning woman was secure in her commitment. The majority of women who do decide to return to school do so for various reasons that we have stated before (i.e. career needs/changes). By deciding to enter the educational mainstream for whatever reason, the re-entry woman shows motivation. Let us consider the responses from the counselors as to their commitment. 50% stated yes and 50% stated not always/no. We must consider that at least 50% of the returning women are not always or are not secure in their commitment. We can see that, according to the counselors, low self-esteem and family problems are the main cause.

> "As with any stage of development and transition, the initial re-entry process may be a time of renewed 'identity' crisis. It is often a time of self-evaluation, self-identification and personal growth. However, it may also be coupled with painful self-doubt and anxiety."[18]

It must be noted that the counselors have perceived the reason for the unsure commitment of some of the re-entry women. The problem is there and must be addressed.

Question #6 asked do many of them ask for help in planning their careers: 6 or 75% stated yes and 2 or 25% stated sometimes.

Let us consider this percentage. As most re-entry women have entered school for career needs/changes and as the majority of the target group are enrolled in programs that would enable them to be ready for employment, the 75% answer would need to be further analyzed. Most women chose a program of study because of work experience relation or because they found it of special interest to them. Therefore, a further study would have to be done on the percentage of students asking for help in planning their careers.

Question #17 asked do they ask for academic help in planning their educational programs if they are continuing to a four-year institution. 6 or 75% stated yes, 1 or 12% stated no, and 1 or 13% stated that most of them do.

What is important to remember here is that the institution does have college transfer days. Further study would have to be done to analye how many students attend and also how many students follow through with planning for further education.

Question #8 asked what do you perceived as the needs to be fulfilled regarding the returning woman student. 5 or 31% stated the need for understanding of their life situations; 5 or 32% stated the need for support groups; 2 or 13% stated building their academic skills; 1 or 6% stated the need for exploring alternatives; 1 or 6% stated an active representation in policy making; 1 or 6% stated increased counseling services; and 1 or 6% stated increased institutional support.

Of the 16 responses, it is important to note that 31% of the counselors stated that there is a need for the understanding of their life situations and 32% stated the need of support groups. Kasworm in "Student Services for the Older Undergraduate Student," states just such needs.

> "The central mission of student personnel and academic supportive services is to assist each student to function successfully as a member of the academic community. Unfortunately, universities and colleges have not readily adapted their supportive services to encompass the unique needs and characteristics of the older student. Often the older adult is an invisible student on campus, attempting to accommodate himself or herself to the 'youth-oriented' environment."[19]

18. Women's Educational Equity Act, Program of the Department of Education, Field Evaluation Draft,"The Counseling Needs of Re-Entry Women," p. 5.

19. Kasworm, p. 168

It is important for all college personnel to have an understanding of the life situations and needs of the older returning woman. Although there is a recognition that the institution must have this, we need to analyze what is being done to arrive at such an understanding.

Question #9 asked if you feel that the system has to be changed. If so, how. 4 or 50% stated yes and 4 or 50% did not answer or stated no. For those who answered yes, there were various solutions. Some of the following ways were:

- Define the problems of the older woman student
- A need to be more responsive to her needs
- More flexible in terms of policies and course requirements
- Additional programs for the older student
- Current programs are under-utilized, step them up to meet the needs
- Should be more informality and less structure.

Once again, the definition of the problems seems to be the main focus. Counseling is an important function that should respond to the problems of all students. In talking with older women students, the author found that most feel very uncomfortable talking to younger counselors and male counselors.

> "They need a large amount of support in order to help free themselves of the feeling that their age means that it's too late. We have found that as they feel comfortable because of peer identification at the Center for Alternative Studies, we are able to bridge the gap for them to the other components of the College....."[20]

In order to determine if there is peer identification in counseling at North Shore Community College, the following question was asked.

Question #10 asked how many counselors are "returning women." 1 or 13% stated 2, 3 or 37% stated none, 1 or 13% stated staff at the Center for Alternative Studies fulfill this slot, and 3 or 27% did not know or stated no.

We can see that 64% of the counselors recognize that there are no returning women as counselors. This reinforces the statement that returning women can not be comfortable with people who they feel are not aware of their problems. The staff at the Center for Alternative Studies has bridged the gap by talking personnally to the counselors they referred students to. However, this type of service does not service the entire target group.

It can be stated that the returning woman is and could be serviced by the Division of Continuing Education, given the facts that they day-time classes and support systems create a problem for her. This statement is true to a point. As we have reiterated that counseling is an important factor, the following question was asked.

Question #10 asked how many counselors are available through the Division of Continuing Education. 4 or 50% stated they did not know, 2 or 25% stated 3, and 2 or 25% stated that all counselors are available. We recognize the fact the the Counseling Center is open at Sohier Road only until 7:45 p.m. What we must consider is that if a woman is taking courses at night, the classes usually start around 7:00 p.m. We also have to consider that as a returning woman, whether working or not, she usually would not have the time before classes to see a counselor. As re-entry women are usually working or have other family commitments, to see a counselor in the day-time could create further problems for her.

20. Barbara Rosenberg and Betty A. Wintersteen, "Women In Transition," presented to Anita P. Turner, Director, Center for Alternative Studies, p. 4.

The need for support groups was an important factor that 32% of the counselors saw as one of the needs to be fulfilled regarding the returning woman student. In order to determine what is being fulfilled at North Shore Community College regarding this area, the following question was asked.

Question #12 asked is there any mechanism for bringing the older women students together for a support system. There were 13 responses.

2 or 15% stated the Motivation Program, 2 or 15% stated support clubs, 1 or 8% stated the Women's Center, 1 or 8% stated the Welfare Rights Group, 1 or 8% stated Special Services, 3 or 23% stated the Re-Entry Program, 2 or 15% stated courses offered for returning women and 1 or 8% did not answer. Let us examine some of these responses.

The Motivation Program, in that it offers a successfully proven support structure, is a "perfect" model for the support system needed for retruning women. However, the Motivation Program can not serve as the one and only support system. This program accepts only a specific amount of students: 60 in the Fall Semester and 30 in the Spring Semester. We must also take into consideration that not all returning women are in need of the intense support structure and intense concentration that is provided by the Motivation Program. In fact, the term "Motivation" would turn off those students who know in which direction they are headed and who have the skills that are needed. We must also consider that the Motivation Program is located at the Essex Street campus. If a student has come through this program and is finally taking courses at Sohier Road, the student would not have immediate access to this support system as there is no gathering point at Sohier Road.

At this point in time, there are few support clubs at North Shore Community College. The Older Students' Club is defunct. There had been an effort to get it off the ground. Unfortunately, those students who are interested in seeing such a club do not have the time to give. As the institution is a two year institution, and if a club is running successfully, the student leaders are lost upon graduation.

The Women's Center does provide services. We will analyze this option later on. As for the Re-Entry Program, there have been workshops scheduled for the older students during the day. However, few women have availed themselves of this component.

FACULTY INTERFACE WITH STUDENTS

We have stated that as Faculty are usually the first contact the older woman student has with the academic world, the author felt it was important to question Faculty in regard to this research project.

35 Faculty Members were chosen by random number to participate in this research project. 18 or 51% responded. The questions were asked what Division, Department they were in and what their job title was.

Two were from the Division of Human Services, 3 from the Science Division, 1 from the Nursing Division, 4 from the Business Division, 3 from the English/Communications Division, 1 from Allied Health, and 4 from Humanities/Social Science.

The Departments represented were Early Childhood, Mental Health, Biology, Industrial Technology, Math, Nursing Education, Secretarial Science, Business, Special Services, English, Communications/Media, Physical Therapy, Behavorial Science, Cultural Arts, and History.

There were 4 Program Coordinators, 5 Assistant Professors, 1 Division Chairperson, 2 Instructors, 4 Professors, and 2 Department Chairpersons.

The Faculty were asked how many classes they taught. There were more than one type of class listed.

Question #6 asked for the total number of students in all your classes. The average number of students was 84.44.

Question #7 asked how many older women students do you have. The average number was 7.22. The mode was 6. (The author feels that the Faculty Members were uncertain as to ages by looks).

Question #8 asked how do you evaluate the older woman as a student. There were 25 responses. 3 or 12% stated that she is high in experiential learning, 7 or 28% stated that she is an outstanding, excellent student, 8 or 32% stated that she is very conscientious, 6 or 24% stated she is unsure/nervous, and 1 or 4% stated she is like all other students.

Question #9 asked how do you evaluate the older woman student's motivation. 14 or 78% stated she is highly motivated, 1 or 6% stated she is superior, 2 or 10% stated she is very good, and 1 or 6% stated she is excellent.

We can see that Faculty as well as the Counselors perceive the older woman student as an outstanding and highly motivated student.

Let us compare the students' responses to how they felt that Faculty perceived them as a student. We can see that only 11% of the target group felt that Faculty viewed them as serious students. As 52% gave inappropriate answers and 19% did not know or did not answer, we recognize that although Faculty review these students as outstanding, the interaction between Faculty and students proves a descripancy in viewpoint only. This would have to be analyzed further to determine if the students are not communicating with the Faculty.

Question #10 asked do you feel that the older woman student participates more or less than the younger student. 14 or 78% stated she participates more; 1 or 6% stated less at first, then the same; 1 or 6% stated some more, some less; 1 or 6% stated neither; and 1 or 6% stated usually more, depending on her self-esteem.

Question #11 asked do you relate to them on the same level as the younger student. 10 or 56% stated no. In response to if not, why: 5 or 50% stated their interests and life experiences are different; 1 or 10% stated they listen better; 2 or 20% stated they (Faculty) can relate to them; 1 or 10% stated they (students) tend to be a peer group; and 1 or 10% stated they were not a disruptive force.

8 or 44% stated they related to them on the same level as the younger students. In response to why: 3 or 35% stated we are all adults; 1 or 13% stated he/she is looking for skill and knowledge, not age; 1 or 13% stated he/she forgets that they are older students; 1 or 13% stated he/she tries to be impartial; 1 or 13% stated because it is the policy; and 1 or 12% stated no, but has more understanding because he/she is their peer.

Question #12 asked do they enhance the class. 17 or 94% stated yes and 1 or 6% stated sometimes. There were 25 responses as to how they enhance the class. 6 or 29%

stated because of their life experiences; 4 or 16% stated that they are more serious; 7 or 28% stated they stimulate the younger students; 5 or 20% stated the older women participate more in class; 3 or 12% stated they were more mature; and 1 or 4% did not answer why.

We can see that Faculty views the older returning woman student as serious, enhancing the class, participating more, and having different interests and life experiences than the younger student. In other words, the older returning woman student is an asset to the College.

Question #13 asked can you identify any particular issue that seems to be common to the older returning woman student. There were 23 responses. 6 or 26% stated they were anxious and self-critical; 3 or 13% stated they were unsure of abilities; 3 or 13% stated they had a problem with organization of time; 3 or 13% stated there were marital/family problems; 2 or 9% stated they had a problem coping with role demands; 1 or 4% stated they were unsure of the role of women in the job market; 1 or 4% stated there was a need for support and encouragement; 1 or 4% stated they needed to know how to study; and 3 or 13% did not answer.

It is evident that the Faculty at North Shore Community College have a handle on the problems of the returning woman student. We will evaluate further on in this report the Faculty's responses to the components of the College as fulfilling the needs of the returning woman student.

Question #14 asked for the number of older women students that you service as a Faculty Advisor. The average number is 1.3 The mode is 2.

Since there were 154 older women students enrolled full-time days in the Fall of 1980, we can see that if all Faculty serviced 1.3 older women students, our statistical analysis would be correct. However, we must consider that the number of part-time older women students are unknown. Part-time students are not assigned a Faculty Advisor; but if they request one, they would be assigned to one. This system needs to be further researched and analyzed.

Question #15 asked Faculty to list some of the concerns of their advisees. There were 21 responses. 6 or 27% did not answer; 3 or 13% stated marital/family concerns; 4 or 20% stated the student wanted to know what comes next-can they make it; 4 or 20% stated the students felt they were too old to be students and had low self-esteems; 2 or 10% stated the students found a problem with time for role changes; and 2 or 10% stated the students were anxious. Once again, the same factors appear - THE PROFILE OF THE RETURNING WOMAN STUDENT.

ADMINISTRATION

Although Counselors and Faculty have more interface with students, the important point to consider is that Administrators are the ones who decide on policies and procedures of the College. The author felt it was very important to get some feedback from administrators at the College as to how they felt regarding returning women students. Therefore, a questionnaire was designed for this sector of the College (See Figure VI , Appendix). Twelve Administrators were picked at random. Ten or 83% responded.

Question #1 asked their position. There were three Division Chairpersons, two Coordinators, the President, one Dean, an Assistant Dean, a Director, and an Assistant Director.

Question #2 asked what do you perceive as the needs to be fulfilled regarding the returning woman student. There were 21 responses. 6 or 29% stated the need for support groups; 2 or 10% stated a peer model/supervisor; 1 or 4% stated a place to meet; 5 or 24% stated academic/personal skill building; 1 or 5% stated time management skills; 3 or 14% stated day care facilities; 2 or 10% stated orientation to higher education; and 1 or 4% stated that there is a need to elevate the quality of classes that are offered.

We can see that the majority of the Administrators recognize some of the needs. What is important to ask at this point is if there is a recognition of the problems/needs, where is the solution? We see that most of the needs are not presently being fulfilled at the institution. Let us address some of them.

We can examine the support group need. As we have stated, the few support groups that have been available in the past are no longer in existence. As for a peer model/supervisor, we have stated that the Motivation Program is the only program that is indeed fulfilling this need. We could say that the staff of the Center for Alternative Studies are also fulfilling this need. However, this is one area that must be addressed further. These two components of the College can not service the entire population of returning woman students.

As for academic/personal skill building, we will evaluate this need when we evaluate the components of the College further on in this report. We will also address the other needs as well.

Question #3 asked is there any method for recruitment for the older returning woman. There were 12 responses. 2 or 17% stated that there should be improved publicity of the College and the support services; 3 or 25% felt that current methods were enough; 3 or 25% felt that there were no methods at this time; 1 or 8% felt that women should have the option to drop into classes before re-entry; and 2 or 17% felt there should be a community-based outreach by giving one course.

As we have stated earlier, the majority of the target group received their information from friends and former students. The only way to have improved publicity of the College and the support services is to service the current students. We must take into consideration that the institution has a drop-out rate for the second semester of each year. Further analysis would have to be done to see why these students are leaving the institution.

Question #4 asked who do you feel administration is doing to meet the need to schedule classes for the convenience of the returning woman. 5 or 50% felt that the institution is meeting the need. Of these 5, 4 or 80% felt it was by the non-traditional scheduling of classes in Lynn and 1 or 20% stated that there had been no requests for adjustments.

Let us examine the above statistics. We must consider first of all the non-traditional scheduling of classes in Lynn. At this point in time, a student can not take all the required courses she needs in Lynn. Secondly, not all students are from Lynn and would not travel to Lynn in order to fit the non-traditional scheduling into their schedule. We must also consider that most students will not take a class in one semester if it is scheduled at an inappropriate time, given their family responsibilities. They will wait until another semester in the hope that the course will be offered at a more convenient time. However, this can create a problem. We will address this problem later on in the report.

5 or 50% of the administrators stated that they felt the College is not meeting the needs. Of these 5, 2 or 40% stated the College should make it easier to come part-time; 1 or 20% felt that there should be better support for the Women's Center; 1 or 20% felt that there is a need to know the pattern of the needs of the returning woman; and 1 or 20% did not give any specific reason.

If the College makes it easier to come part-time there is still the problem of certain courses being offered when the student would not be able to attend classes. There is also the problem of courses that are needed but are being filled by full-time students. We must also remember that the scheduling of classes is determined by administration and faculty.

It can also be stated that the returning woman can take courses through the Division of Continuing Education. Again, this statement is true. This would eliminate the problem of scheduling of classes for the convenience of the returning woman student. However, we must first consider the time-frame for receiving a degree through this Division. In order to obtain the 60 credits needed for graduation, it would take a student ten semesters or five years if she were taking six credits a semester in order to complete her Associate's Degree. This would be true if all the courses she needed were offered at the right time. However, there is always the possibility that the course will not be offered or will be offered and then cancelled. One student responded that she needed a course and it had not been offered for three semesters in a row. If the returning woman is in need of career changes/needs, this five year time span is too long. Therefore, she does need the day time classes in order to prepare herself for the job market.

We can see that the scheduling of classes is an important factor in regard to the older returning woman student and also for all women students, if they are married. There has to be planning of a better nature in this area. North Shore Community College students on a whole, being of an older age than those straight out of high school, have to provide for themselves.

Question #5 asked is there any mechanism for bringing the older women students together for a support system. 6 or 60% stated yes and 4 or 40% stated no or did not know of any mechanism. Of the six who answered yes, 2 or 25% stated that the Women's Center was a mechanism; 1 or 13% stated the Older Students Group; 2 or 25% stated weekly seminar/support groups; 3 or 37% stated the Re-Entry Program.

Let us examine some of these mechanisms. First of all, the Older Students Group: We have stated earlier that this group has been defunct for one year. Last semester, (Fall, 1980), there was an attempt to re-establish this group. At this point in time nothing has been resolved. We must consider that this is a two year college. We have stated that if you are going to get a support group going and have to depend upon students only, you lose those who have the time and the commitment to see that this group will work. As most returning students are inundated with classes, homework, and family responsibilities as well as trying to adjust to college-life, they do not have time to attend a group to get it going, only to have it become a social group. What is needed is a support group that is managed by College staff members.

We will examine the Women's Center further on in this report.

Question #6 asked if there are any other special methods at North Shore Community College to meet the needs of returning women. 3 or 30% stated no or did not know; 7 or 70% stated yes. The responses of those who stated yes are as follows:

| Current Methods | Future Methods |
|---|---|
| Center for Alternative Studies | Initiate a group through Student Activities |
| Project Re-Entry | Counseling Center staff could make referrals during orientation |
| All support centers are open to all students | Establish informal networks. |

COMPONENTS/SERVICES OF NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

In order to evaluate each component or service of the College, we must examine the responses from the students, counselors, faculty, and administrators in toto. We must also include the students' responses to needs. In this way, we will have a better understanding of the College and how we are/are not fulfilling the needs of the older returning woman student.

Women's Center

| | No Answer | Excellent | Superior | Good | Fair | Unsatisfactory | No basis for evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students | 22% | 3% | 0% | 8% | 11% | 5% | 51% |
| Counselors | | | | 29 | 14 | 14 | 43 |
| Faculty | | 6 | 11 | | 6 | | 77 |
| Administrators | | | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 60 |

As 22% of the students did not answer the question and 51% answered no basis for evaluation, we can assume that 73% of the students interviewed were unaware of this support group. In examining the rest of the statistics, we can see that 29% of the Counselors felt that the Women's Center was fulfilling the needs of the returning women students. However, the rest of the statistics are startling in that the majority of the College's personnel have no basis for evaluation.

Let us examine just how a student would find out about the Women's Center. There is very little mention in either the Day or Division of Continuing Education catalogs regarding this support service. The only way of advertising is word-of-mouth and flyers that are posted on the bulletin boards or passed out in the cafeterias. There is a small blurb printed in the student's handbook. However, again, the information in this book is so vague that women would only know about the Center if they dropped in for information or had heard about the Women's Center from other students. Moreover, a majority of the target group did not know about Student Activities, as we will see. Therefore, these students probably have never seen a student's handbook.

We must also consider that the Director of the Women's Center is a part-time person. The amount of hours that she works is not enough to completely publicize this important service. Another factor that must also be considered is that the current director is the third director in the last few years.

As students have more interface with Faculty, it is startling to see that 77% of the Faculty stated no basis for evaluation. If they do not know what the Women's Center is about, how could they refer students there?

Let us consider some of the needs that this target group felt was needed. 55% of the group stated a marked/excessive need for group support systems. 42% stated a marked/excessive need for assertiveness training workshops/courses. Both of these areas could very well be handled through the Women's Center. However, if the staffing is on a volunteer basis and if the Director is only part-time, how can this support service

give the students what they need?

Women have also stated that the image of the Women's Center has turned them away. We must consider that the returning woman student (35+) is not usually as liberated as her younger sister is. She is from a different world and has a different mind-set. We must take into consideration that, first of all, she is having problems in returning to school. Once into the system, she is confronted with more problems such as fitting classes into her schedule. We would have to analyze this data even further. However, as all students pay the student activities fee, this component should have better support for the 50% female population of the College.

Admissions /Orientations:

| | No Answer | Excellent | Superior | Good | Fair | Unsatisfactory | No basis for Evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students | 27% | 11% | 5% | 19% | 5% | 8% | 25% |
| Counselors | | | 29 | | 43 | 14 | 14 |
| Faculty | | 6 | 11 | 22 | | | 61 |
| Administrators | | 10 | 10 | 30 | 10 | 10 | 30 |

We can see that 27% of the students did not answer and 25% had no basis for evaluation. Therefore, we can say that 52% of the target group are unfamiliar with admissions/ orientations. Let us examine the process.

Letters are sent to new applicants by Admissions after the tuition deposits are received. New incoming students are invited to attend orientation and assessment seminars. During the Fall, 1980 semester, according to the Counseling Center, 960 individuals participated. However, this statistic is for all students, regardless of age/sex. We can not, therefore, state just how many of our target group have been involved in this process.

The above statistics raise several questions. What information is given? Why does the Faculty not know about the orientations? In this process really an administration process and an introduction process?

Another facter we must consider is that there is a portion of older women students who attend the college part-time days. At this point in time, it is hard to identify these numbers. By going part-time days, these students are usually unaware of things. Student R stated: "By going part-time days, I felt separate from the school. I did not know what was going on or what was available. As nothing was explained to me, I did not know where to ask or whom to ask for help."

We need to examine the needs as expressed by the target group. 49% of this group expressed a marked/excessive need for an orientatior program for students returning to college after a break in their schooling. We can see that as this group was unfamiliar with the admissions and assessment process they would indeed express such a need. Student R added: "I would like to see admissions' orientations for the older student, not just general college information, but information that would get the older student in touch with other older students: a contact and support system."

Assessment Seminars:

| | No Answer | Excellent | Superior | Good | Fair | Unsatisfactory | No basis for Evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students | 27% | 3% | 0% | 5% | 11% | 0% | 54% |
| Counselors | | | 14 | 43 | 43 | | |
| Faculty | | | 6 | 16 | | | 78 |
| Administrators | | 20 | 10 | 20 | 10 | | 40 |

We can see that 27% of the students did not answer and 54% had no basis for evaluation. Therefore, we can presume that 81% of this group have not been through the assessment process.

According to statistics from the Counseling Center, at least 90% of new incoming students go through the assessment seminars. It seems ironic that of the 37 students who responded to these questionnaires that 81% had no basis for evaluation. If we can state that 90% do complete this process, that would mean that, statistically, 33 of our target group should have known about it.

Another factor to consider is are part-time day and evening students advised of this assessment process?

Student Activities

| | No Answer | Excellent | Superior | Good | Fair | Unsatisfactory | No basis for Evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students | 22% | 5% | 5% | 8% | 5% | 3% | 51% |
| Counselors | | | 14 | 14 | 43 | 29 | |
| Faculty | | | 6 | 33 | 11 | 11 | 39 |
| Administrators | | | 10 | 40 | 10 | 20 | 20 |

As 22% of the target group did not answer and 51% had no basis for evaluation, we can presume that 73% of this group knew nothing about Student Activities. This factor is in tune with the fact that the target group - 86% - had stated that they were not involved in any social aspects of the College.

We have previously stated a solution for the problem of the older returning woman and the Student Activities Fees.

Student Council:

| | No Answer | Excellent | Superior | Good | Fair | Unsatisfactory | No basis for Evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students | 25% | 3% | 3% | 6% | 9% | 3% | 51% |
| Counselors | | | 14 | | 58 | 14 | 14 |
| Faculty | | | | 16 | 6 | 11 | 67 |
| Administrators | | | | 40 | | | 60 |

We can see that the majority of the students, faculty and administrators had no basis for evaluation regarding the Student Council.

Let us examine just what is meant by Student Council. According to the Student's Handbook, every student who is enrolled as a full-time or part-time day student pays the Student Activities Fee. This automatically gives these students memberhip in the Student Association. Continuing Education students may join as part-time members. We recognize

the fact that every service, activity, and opportunity of the group is available to Student Association Members. We also recognize the fact that this entitles the student to organize activities and programs, to become involved with the various social, athletic, recreational, and cultural activities. However, as for our target group, we have seen that they do not have the time for such activities.

We also recognize that any student can run for election for the Student Senate. It would be beneficial for this target group to have a representative on the Student Senate when it comes to fulfilling the objectives of the Student Senate. However, we must reiterate again that this group does not have the time to be involved as intensely as a younger student who does not have the outside work and family responsibilities.

Counseling Centers:

| | No Answer | Excellent | Superior | Good | Fair | Unsatisfactory | No Basis for Evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students | 24% | 14% | 8% | 11% | 14% | 5% | 24% |
| Counselors | | 29 | 14 | 14 | 29 | 14 | |
| Faculty | | 6 | 39 | 16 | | | 39 |
| Administrators | | 10 | 10 | 40 | 20 | | 20 |

We can see that 24% of the target group did not answer the question and 24% had no basis for evaluation. Therefore, we can presume that 48% did not know about the Counseling Centers. We have previously stated that 49% of the target group expressed a marked/ escessive need for educational/vocational counseling and only 25% stated a marked/ excessive need for personal/social counseling. It is interesting to note that the percentages for educational/vocational counseling needs and for those who did not know about the Counseling Center are nearly the same. Further analysis of this data would have to be done to determine if both the percentages are from the same students.

Academic Skills Center:

| | No Answer | Excellent | Superior | Good | Fair | Unsatisfactory | No Basis for Evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students | 22% | 16% | 14% | 8% | 8% | | 32% |
| Counselors | | 29 | 14 | 57 | | | |
| Faculty | | 16 | 33 | 28 | | | 23 |
| Administrators | | 30 | 30 | 20 | | | 30 |

We can see that 54% of the target group did not know about the Academic Skills Center, by not answering or having no basis for evaluation. We could state that as these students are highly motivated and are considered excellent, outstanding students by the Faculty, that they would not need to know about the Academic Skills Center. We have previously stated that 39% of the target group found examinations the most difficult and that 30% found writing papers the most difficult. Further analysis would have to be done to see if the percentage of the target group that rated the Academic Skills Center as excellent/superior/good/fair had, indeed, utilized the services offerred by the Skills Center. We can also presume from the rest of the statistics that Counselors, Faculty, and Administrators are aware of these services.

Financial Aid Office:

| | No Answer | Excellent | Superior | Good | Fair | Unsatisfactory | No Basis for Evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students | 19% | 19% | 5% | 16% | 5% | 3% | 33% |
| Counselors | | | 42 | 29 | 29 | | |
| Faculty | | | 11 | 28 | 6 | | 55 |
| Administrators | | | 12 | 30 | 20 | | 30 |

We can see that 52% of the target group did not know about the Financial Aid Office. First of all, we must consider that the majority of the target group (46%) were married and 32% were divorced. We must also take into consideration that as this group decided to return to further their education, they probably paid for it on their own. We would have to do further analysis to see if the target group would qualify for financial aid. At this point in time, such an analysis can not be done.

Another important factor to consider is that 55% of the Faculty did not have any basis for evaluation of the Financial Aid Office. As each Faculty Member is a Faculty Advisor, we feel that this area is an important issue that they should know about. The staff of the Center for Alternative Studies has made it a point to inform prospective students who come to the Center of all the services and components of the College. This is an important factor even though the tuition is lower than a state college. 38% of the target group did express a marked/excessive need for information on Financial Aid.

Placement Office:

| | No Answer | Excellent | Superior | Good | Fair | Unsatisfactory | No Basis for Evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students | 22% | 5% | 5% | 11% | 5% | | 52% |
| Counselors | | 14 | 14 | 43 | 29 | | |
| Faculty | | | 6 | 11 | | | 83 |
| Administrators | | 20 | 10 | 20 | | | 50 |

We can see that 74% of the target group did not answer/had no basis for evaluation about the Placement Office. As this group is a non-traditional group and as they have other responsibilities besides schooling, we must consider that for them a job during the two-year time-frame is inadequate. The Counselors found that the Placement Office is of value. This factor is expected as the Placement Office is located in the Essex Street Counseling Center. However, we can see that 83% of the Faculty and 50% of the Administrators had no basis for evaluation of the Placement Office. In regard to the percentage of Faculty, we must reiterate that this area is also important for Faculty to know about in their role as Faculty Advisors. We must also note that only 30% of the target group stated a marked/excessive need for off-campus placement and/or jobs.

What must be considered is the fact that all students need placement upon graduation. As the Placement Office post current listings and arranges for on-campus employer referrals, it is of importance that our target group be made aware of this option for future reference.

Study Skills Courses:

| | No Answer | Excellent | Superior | Good | Fair | Unsatisfactory | No Basis for Evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students | 24% | 8% | 11% | 16% | | | 41% |
| Counselors | | 29 | 14 | 57 | | | |
| Faculty | | 11 | 40 | 16 | | | 33 |
| Administrators | | 30 | 40 | | | | 30 |

We can see that 65% of the target group did not have any knowledge about the Study Skills Courses or had no need for them. We have also stated that only 30% of the target group stated a marked/excessive need for academic skills courses/workshops. We can also note that the Counselors, Faculty and Administrators felt that the study skill courses were fulfilling the needs of the older returning woman student. We must consider that as such a low percentage stated a need for this and as Faculty viewed the older woman student as excellent and outstanding, it would be of value to further analyze why Counselors, Faculty, and Administrators answered as they did.

Tutoring Services:

| | No Answer | Excellent | Superior | Good | Fair | Unsatisfactory | No Basis for Evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students | 24% | 8% | 14% | | 3% | 11% | 40% |
| Counselors | | 29 | 14 | 43 | 14 | | |
| Faculty | | 11 | 23 | 23 | | | 44 |
| Administrators | | 20 | 30 | 20 | | | 30 |

We can see that 64% of the target group did not know about the tutoring services or did not need them. Counselors showed all percentages as some degree of help. Faculty showed a greater percentage of help as did the Administrators.

Let us consider just what tutoring services consist of at North Shore Community College. The College offers tutors in the following areas: Cultural Arts, Science, Business, Math, Computer Science, and English. The Department of Special Services issues a flyer with this information to the entire College personnel. Some Faculty Members are part of this tutoring service. However, as they are supervisors for their specific academic area they would be only referring students for tutoring in this area. We would have to analyze further to see how students are given this information. Do the Faculty Members recognize that certain students indeed need special help and, thus, refer them? We can see that 44% of the Faculty had no basis for evaluation of the tutoring services. We also recognize the fact that some information is provided in the student's handbook. But again, we must state that if this information is not readily obtainable to the student population, it appears that those students requiring such services are not being serviced. Further study would have to be done to see if the students did not know or did not need this service.

Math/Business Labs:

| | No Answer | Excellent | Superior | Good | Fair | Unsatisfactory | No Basis for Evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students | 24% | 5% | 11% | 8% | 11% | 5% | 36% |
| Counselors | | 14 | | 58 | 14 | | 14 |
| Faculty | | | 44 | 12 | | | 44 |
| Administrators | | | 30 | 40 | | | 30 |

We can see that 24% of the target group did not answer and 36% had no basis for evalation: or 60%. Let us examine this component further. If we refer to page 16 we can see that 18 or 49% of the target group listed Math in response to Question #16. Of these 18, 9 or 50% found Math to be in the hardest category. We can also see from Question #13, that 22% of the target group were enrolled in programs that did not require Math. We must also consider that the M /Business Labs are at Sohier Road. As most of our target group seem to be taki asses at Essex Street and as most returning women do have other time commitments, an analysis of the Labs would have to be done to see just how many older women students are using this service. We recognize the fact that there is a Math Lab at Watch Hill. However, this is usually for the Motivation students. Therefore, those students who are not in the Motivation Program would not know of this service. We also recognize that the Business Lab is at Sohier Road and that the Business Transfer and Career students are taking their classes at this campus. However, how does the information get out that there is such a component?

Center for Alternative Studies:

| | No Answer | Excellent | Superior | Good | Fair | Unsatisfactory | No Basis for Evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students | 19% | 14% | 5% | 11% | 5% | 5% | 41% |
| Counselors | | 14 | 29 | 43 | | | 14 |
| Faculty | | 23 | 16 | 11 | 6 | | 44 |
| Administrators | | 30 | 30 | 30 | | | 10 |

We can see that 19% of the target group did not answer and 41% had no basis for evaluation - 60% of the target group. The majority of the Counselors and the Administrators felt that the Center was fulfilling the needs of the older returning woman student. However, we can see that 44% of the Faculty had no basis for evaluation. Further analysis would have to be done on this portion of the Faculty to determine if they: (1). do not recognize the feasibility of Experience Credit, have never supervised Directed Studies or Contract Learnings; (2) do not know what the Center does; or (3) do not know if their students could use the assistance of the Center.

The Center informs the College personnel, the administrative level, of the accomplishments of the Center each year. Information as to the Center's programs are printed in both the Day and Division of Contiuning Education catalogs as well as the Master Schedule for Day students. There is a liaison between the Registrar's office, the Division of Continuing Education, a portion of the Faculty, Department and Divisions Chairpersons, and the Center.

We have stated that the target group usually has a wealth of life experiences. We have also stated that certain disciplines do not recognize the feasibility of life experiences. As the target group is a non-traditional student group, the feasibility of experiential learning credits should be addressed in all disciplines for this group.

The Center has been involved in conferences explaining how alternative studies are integrated with regular classroom learning. It is important that the institution as well as the Center expand information-giving to involve more direct contact with re-entry students. The Center does do this to a point by being involved in Back to School workshops. The Center is not involved in any of the registrations, but it is expected that the College personnel who are involved will send students to the Center. However, this is usual done for those students who are aware of the options. Those few students who inquire about the Center's services are either referred by Faculty working at registrations and who recognize the concept of Experience Credit. A few day students will ask on their own. The Center sees more prospective students who are taking courses through the Division of Continuing Education. If the students are not ready for the alternative options, the Center refers them back to other College components. The return-on-investment of this referral would require extensive analysis.

We have previously stated that word-of-mouth is the greatest public relations. It has been recognized that the Center has serviced a good portion of current and prospective students. The majority of the service is usually given in the student's last semester. Therefore, the word-of-mouth public relations by these students would have to be analyzed further. At this point in time, the Center is redesigning its intake card to include referral source identification.

Motivation:

| | No Answer | Excellent | Superior | Good | Fair | Unsatisfactory | No Basis for Evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students | 22% | 25% | 8% | 3% | 5% | 3% | 33% |
| Counselors | | 43 | 29 | 29 | | | |
| Faculty | | 33 | 33 | 6 | | | 28 |
| Administrators | | 20 | 30 | | 10 | | 40 |

We can see that as 23% of the target group did not answer and as 33% had no basis for evaluation, we have a total of 56% who did not know about Motivation. We can see, also, that Counselors, Faculty, and Administrators felt that Motivation was fulfilling the needs of the returning woman student. We agree with this statement. We have stated that the Motiviation Program is an excellent model for servicing the returning woman student. However, what we have to take into consideration is that this program takes only 90 students per year. We must also take into consideration that a certain portion of theolder returning woman student population would not feel that they would need such an intense program. Students that do apply are screened as to the feasibility of the program's services for them. This program also has an excellent peer support system.

Coordinated Studies:

| | No Answer | Excellent | Superior | Good | Fair | Unsatisfactory | No Basis for Evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students | 24% | 5% | 22% | 3% | 5% | 3% | 38% |
| Counselors | | | | 29 | 29 | | 42 |
| Faculty | | 11 | 11 | 6 | | | 66 |
| Administrators | | | | 30 | 20 | 10 | 40 |

We can see that 62% of the target group did not answer and/or did not have any basis for evaluation. A large percentage of the Counselors, Faculty, and Administrators also had no basis for evaluation of this component. What is important at this point in time is that Coordinated Studies no longer exists.

Faculty Advisor System:

| | No Answer | Excellent | Superior | Good | Fair | Unsatisfactory | No Basis for Evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students | 19% | 14% | 8% | 14% | 8% | 5% | 32% |
| Counselors | | | | 14 | 29 | 57 | |
| Faculty | | 17 | 11 | 38 | 17 | | 17 |
| Administrators | | | | 40 | 40 | | 20 |

We can see that 51% of the target group did not answer/had no basis for evaluation of the Faculty Advisor System. Further evaluation would have to be done to see what portion of the target group are going part-time. Faculty Advisors are given to full-time students only. It is interesting to see that 57% of the Counselors felt that this system is not fulfilling the needs of the older returning woman student. Further analysis would have to be done as to why they feel this way.

Faculty Advisors are assigned to students within their programs. However, if the large majority of the Faculty Members are unaware of all the components of the College as to fulfilling the needs of the older woman student, what are the advisors telling these students?

If we refer back to the evaluation of the Faculty questionnaires, we find that the Faculty responding stated they see an average of 1.3 older women students as advisees. We also asked the Faculty to list some of the concerns of the older women they see as advisess. The answeres given were not in regard to academic problems. As such a large percentage of the target group did not answer or had no basis for evaluation, and as the Faculty responded that 1.3 students came to see them, we would have to do further study to see why the re-entry woman student is not using this system. One reason could be, as we have stated before, TIME. Faculty have only certain periods during the day when they are availabe for office hours.

It is also important to remember that Faculty have a clear-cut picture of the problems facing the older returning woman student. Therefore, some mechanism must be instituted to involve Faculty in a greater capacity in servicing the re-entry woman.

Registrations:

| | No Answer | Excellent | Superior | Good | Fair | Unsatisfactory | No Basis for Evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students | 16% | 8% | 3% | 26% | 24% | 15% | 8% |
| Counselors | | | 14 | 43 | 29 | 14 | |
| Faculty | | 6 | 6 | 33 | 17 | 17 | |
| Administrators | | 10 | 10 | 30 | 30 | 10 | 10 |

We can see that all groups found registrations are fulfilling the needs of the returning woman student to some degree. As we asked the participants in this research to just evaluate the components as fulfilling the needs we would expect such answers. We did not asked for an evaluation of the registration process itself.

Course Selections:

| | No Answer | Excellent | Superior | Good | Fair | Unsatisfactory | No Basis for Evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students | 19% | 5% | 5% | 27% | 14% | 19% | 11% |
| Counselors | | | 14 | 29 | 57 | | |
| Faculty | | 11 | 6 | 33 | 21 | 11 | 18 |
| Administrators | | 10 | 20 | 10 | 30 | 20 | 10 |

We can see that all the groups found course selections to be fulfilling the needs of the re-entry women to some degree.

Let us consider the above two services of the College. Further analysis would have to be done to see why the percentage of the students who did not answer or had no basis for evaluation even showed up in the statistics. One explanation could be that a portion of these students have been in the Motivation Program. These students do indeed pick their courses, but all the cards were pulled for them and the registration done for them. We can explain the percentages of those who did find both registrations and course selections as unsatisfactory. There will always be a portion of the student body, counselors, faculty and administrators who will find such a system as unsatisfactory. One reason could be the time frame. Some people get very agitated waiting in line for anything. For those percentages of Faculty and Administrators who expressed no basis for evaluation, we could say that they have never been involved with either services.

EVALUATION

We have examined all the questionnaires, compiled the statistics for the components of the College and have presented an analysis. We have previously stated that 68% of the target group stated they had received information regarding the College. However, we can see from the aforementioned statistics, that this percentage is inaccurate. At least 50% of our group did not answer/had no basis for evaluation for most of the components of the College. We would have to do further research as to what type of information this percentage had received.

We also note that 54% of the target group stated they were aware of the options and/or help available to them at the College. After compiling our statistics, we found that this percentage is also inaccurate.

We have also noted that the Faculty involved in this project have a composite picture of the returning woman student and her problems. Further analysis would have to be done as to the remainder of the Faculty's responses to our questionnaires.

The author has presented her findings and the resulting statistics as well as her suggestions and proposals for serving this sector of the student population at North Shore Community College. The author does plan to do further research regarding the academic and social problems of returning women students at other institutions such as Salem State College, other community colleges and some private four year institutions. The problem is not unique but is one that needs to be addressed by all institutions of higher learning.

Compiled by:
Betty A. Wintersteen



FIGURE III

CENTER FOR ALTERNATIVE STUDIES
MODEL FOR WORKING WITH RETURNING WOMEN:
A STUDENT NEEDS QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name:_____

2. Address:_____

3. Age:_____

4. Level of schooling prior to NSCC: High School diploma_____
GED (High School Equivalency)_____
Some High School_____Some college_____

5. Marital Status: Married_____ Separated_____ Divorced____ Single_____ Widowed_____

6. If applicable, how many children do you have? _____ No. of children

7. If applicable, how old are your children? Please check all that are applicable.

a. Preschool age____ b. Grade school age____ c. High School age_____
d. Older than high school age_____

8. How long were you away from school before your present enrollment in college?

_____years away from school.

9. What prompted you to go to college?_____

_____

10. Why did you decide to enroll at North Shore Community College?_____

_____

11. Did you receive any information about the College before you decided to enroll?_____

If so, how or from whom?_____

12. Are you aware of the options and/or help available to you at the College?_____

_____

13. What program are you in or do you wish to enroll in?_____

_____

14. How or why did you choose this program?_____

_____

_____

15. What classroom format do you find most difficult? Reading and research on own_____

Group projects_____ Examinations_____ Writing papers_____ Lectures_____

16. What courses are easy for you?_____

average for you?_____

hardest for you?_____

17. Do you find faculty helpful in bridging this first sector of your learning experience?_____

_____

18. How do you perceive the faculty's view of you as a student?_____

_____

19. Do you find that younger students accept you as a classmate or do they keep aloof due to your age?_____

_____

20. Have you made an attempt to bridge the age gap? If so, in their terms or yours?

_____

21. Do your problems at home, if any, interfere with your performance as a student? ____

22. Would you be willing to identify some of these problems to help us?_____

_____

23. Would you be willing to identify some of the support mechanisms you have at home?

_____

_____

24. Do you find a hesitancy within yourself to express a viewpoint on subject matter in class? _____ If so, why?_____

25. Do you work or have you worked?_____

26. Have you been involved in any volunteer work?_____

27. Are your previous working and life experiences helping you to adjust to college life?

_____

28. Do they enhance any of your courses?_____ If so, state how_____

_____

29. Have you been involved in any social aspects of the college?_____

Why or why not?_____

_____

Please evaluate your personal need for help for further information/ services in the following areas.

| | No Need | Little Need | Marked need | Excessive need |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 30. Financial Aid | | | | |
| 31. Advisement regarding four-year institutions | | | | |
| 32. Counseling: Educational/vocational | | | | |
| 33. Credit by examinations; credit for life experiences | | | | |
| 34. Academic skills courses/workshops (studying, writing, etc.) | | | | |
| 35. Personal/social counseling | | | | |
| 36. Assertiveness training workshops/courses | | | | |
| 37. Off-campus placement and/or jobs | | | | |
| 38. Text-anxiety reduction workshops | | | | |
| 39. Group support system | | | | |
| 40. Health services | | | | |
| 41. Athletic and social services/activities | | | | |
| 42. Child care services/information | | | | |
| 43. Orientation program for students returning to college after a break in their schooling | | | | |
| 44. Special publications for returning students | | | | |
| 45. Campus information and referral service for returning students | | | | |
| 46. Leadership and communications skills courses for returning students | | | | |

Please list any other needs you feel are important

Please evaluate the following options/help available at North Shore Community College

| | Excellent | Superior (Above standard) | Good (Standard) | Fair (Below standard) | Unsatisfactory | No basis for evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 47. Women's Center | | | | | | |
| 48. Admissions Orientations | | | | | | |
| 49. Assessment Seminars | | | | | | |
| 50. Student Activities | | | | | | |
| 51. Student Council | | | | | | |
| 52. Counseling Centers | | | | | | |
| 53. Academic Skills Center | | | | | | |
| 54. Financial Aid Office | | | | | | |
| 55. Placement Office | | | | | | |
| 56. Study Skills courses | | | | | | |
| 57. Tutoring Services | | | | | | |
| 58. Math/Business Labs | | | | | | |
| 59. Center for Alternative Studies | | | | | | |
| 60. Motivation | | | | | | |
| 61. Coordinated Studies | | | | | | |
| 62. Faculty Advisor system | | | | | | |
| 63. Registrations | | | | | | |
| 64. Course Selection | | | | | | |

Indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements by placing the number in the blank that best describes your feelings about each statement.

Strongly agree 1 Agree 2 Neutral 3 Disagree 4 Strongly disagree 5

_____65. I returned to school to learn a skill in order to prepare me for a career.

_____66. I returned to school so that I could advance within my career.

_____67. I returned to school so that I could make more money.

_____68. I returned to school for my own personal fulfillment.

_____69. I returned to school to further my general knowledge.

Compiled by: 49
Betty A. Wintersteen

FIGURE IV

CENTER FOR ALTERNATIVE STUDIES
MODEL FOR WORKING WITH RETURNING WOMEN (35+)
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COUNSELORS

1. Do you have older women students asking for counseling?_____

2. Can you give a percentage?_____

3. Do they ask for academic or personal counseling?_____

4. How do you rate their motivation?_____

5. Do you find them secure in their commitment? If not, what do you feel is the reason?

_____

6. Do many of them ask for help in planning their career?_____

7. Do they ask for academic help in planning their educational programs if they are continuing to a four year institution?_____

8. What do you perceive as the needs to be fulfilled regarding the returning woman student?

_____

9. Do you feel that the system has to be changed? If so, how? If not, why?_____

_____

10. How many counselors are "returning women."_____

11. How many counselors are available through the Division of Continuing Education for the older returning woman?_____

12. Is there any mechanism for bringing the older women students together for a support system?_____

13. Please fill out the attached form.

**CAS Questionnaire**

**Please evaluate the following options/help available at NSCC as to fulfilling the needs of returning older women students.**

| | Excellent | Superior (Above standard) | Good (Standard) | Fair (Below standard) | Unsatisfactory | No basis for evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Women's Center | | | | | | |
| 2. Admissions Orientations | | | | | | |
| 3. Assessment Seminars | | | | | | |
| 4. Student Activities | | | | | | |
| 5. Student Council | | | | | | |
| 6. Counseling Centers | | | | | | |
| 7. Academic Skills Center | | | | | | |
| 8. Financial Aid Office | | | | | | |
| 9. Placement Office | | | | | | |
| 10. Study Skills courses | | | | | | |
| 11. Tutoring Services | | | | | | |
| 12. Math/Business Labs | | | | | | |
| 13. Center for Alternative Studies | | | | | | |
| 14. Motivation | | | | | | |
| 15. Coordinated Studies | | | | | | |
| 16. Faculty Advisor System | | | | | | |
| 17. Registrations | | | | | | |
| 18. Course Selection | | | | | | |

Are there any other options/services/help available that you know of that would fulfill the needs of the older returning woman student?

Compiled by:
Betty A. Wintersteen

FIGURE V

CENTER FOR ALTERNATIVE STUDIES
MODEL FOR WORKING WITH RETURNING WOMEN:(35+)
A STUDENT NEEDS QUESTIONNAIRE
FOR FACULTY

1. Division _____
2. Department _____
3. Name _____
4. Job Title: _____
5. Class(es) _____
6. Total number of students in all your classes? _____
7. How many older (35+) women students do you have? _____
8. How do you evaluate the older woman as a student? _____

   _____
9. How do you evaluate the older woman student's motivation? _____

   _____
10. Do you feel that the older woman student participates more _____

    less _____ than the younger students?
11. Do you relate to them on the same level as the younger student? Why? _____

    _____

    If not, why? _____
12. Do they enhance the class? _____ How? _____

    _____
13. Can you identify any particular issue that seems to be common to many of the older returning women? _____

    _____
14. Number of older women students that you service as a Faculty Advisor _____
15. List some of the concerns of these students _____

    _____
16. Please fill out the attached form.

CAS Questionnaire

Please evaluate the following options/help available at NSCC as to fulfilling the needs of returning older women students.

| | Excellent | Superior (Above standard) | Good (Standard) | Fair (Below standard) | Unsatisfactory | No basis for evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Women's Center | | | | | | |
| 2. Admissions Orientations | | | | | | |
| 3. Assessment Seminars | | | | | | |
| 4. Student Activities | | | | | | |
| 5. Student Council | | | | | | |
| 6. Counseling Centers | | | | | | |
| 7. Academic Skills Center | | | | | | |
| 8. Financial Aid Office | | | | | | |
| 9. Placement Office | | | | | | |
| 10. Study Skills courses | | | | | | |
| 11. Tutoring Services | | | | | | |
| 12. Math/Business Labs | | | | | | |
| 13. Center for Alternative Studies | | | | | | |
| 14. Motivation | | | | | | |
| 15. Coordinated Studies | | | | | | |
| 16. Faculty Advisor System | | | | | | |
| 17. Registrations | | | | | | |
| 18. Course Selection | | | | | | |

Are there any other options/services/help available that you know of that would fulfill the needs of the older returning woman student?

Compiled by:
Betty A. Wintersteen

FIGURE VI

CENTER FOR ALTERNATIVE STUDIES
MODEL FOR WORKING WITH RETURNING WOMEN (35+)
A STUDENT NEEDS QUESTIONNAIRE
FOR ADMINISTRATORS

1. Postion/Name _____

2. What do you perceive as the needs to be fulfilled regarding the returning woman student?

_____

_____

3. Is there any method for recruitment of the older returning woman?

_____

_____

4. What do you feel the administration is doing to meet the need to schedule classes for the convenience of the returning woman?_____

_____

5. Is there any mechanism for bringing the older women students together for a support system?_____

_____

6. Are there any other special methods at NSCC to meet the needs of returning women?_____

_____

7. Please fill out the attached form.

CAS Questionnaire

Please evaluate the following options/help available at NSCC as to fulfilling the needs of returning older women students.

| | Excellent | Superior (Above standard) | Good (Standard) | Fair (Below standard) | 54 Unsatisfactory | No basis for evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Women's Center | | | | | | |
| 2. Admissions Orientations | | | | | | |
| 3. Assessment Seminars | | | | | | |
| 4. Student Activities | | | | | | |
| 5. Student Council | | | | | | |
| 6. Counseling Centers | | | | | | |
| 7. Academic Skills Center | | | | | | |
| 8. Financial Aid Office | | | | | | |
| 9. Placement Office | | | | | | |
| 10. Study Skills courses | | | | | | |
| 11. Tutoring Services | | | | | | |
| 12. Math/Business Labs | | | | | | |
| 13. Center for Alternative Studies | | | | | | |
| 14. Motivation | | | | | | |
| 15. Coordinated Studies | | | | | | |
| 16. Faculty Advisor System | | | | | | |
| 17. Registrations | | | | | | |
| 18. Course Selection | | | | | | |

Are there any other options/services/help available that you know of that would fulfill the needs of the older returning woman student?

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